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THE ENGLISHMAN IN CHINA

CHAP. XXIII.: *Tsze-kung asked, saying, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not* RECIPROCITY *such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."*

Mr. Alcock, at the age of 34.
from a drawing by L.A. de Fabeck. 1843.

Walker & Cockerell lith.

THE ENGLISHMAN IN CHINA

DURING THE VICTORIAN ERA

AS ILLUSTRATED IN

THE CAREER OF

SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK, K.C.B., D.C.L.

MANY YEARS CONSUL AND MINISTER IN
CHINA AND JAPAN

BY

ALEXANDER MICHIE

AUTHOR OF
'THE SIBERIAN OVERLAND ROUTE,' 'MISSIONARIES
IN CHINA,' ETC.

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VOL. I.

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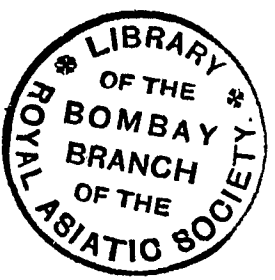

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PREFACE.

REMINISCENCES of the Far East called up by the death of Sir Rutherford Alcock in November 1897 prompted the writer to send a contribution on the subject to 'Blackwood's Magazine.' Being appreciated by the family, the article suggested to them some more substantial memorial of the deceased statesman, a scheme with which the writer fell in the more readily that it seemed to harmonise with the task which friends had been already urging upon him—that of writing some account of occurrences in the Far East during his own residence there. For there was no other name round which these events could be so consistently grouped during the thirty years when British policy was a power in that part of the world. As Consul and Minister Alcock was so interwoven with the history of the period that neither the life of the man nor the times in which he lived could be treated apart. And the personal element renders his connection with Far Eastern affairs particularly instructive, for, combining the highest executive qualities with a philosophic grasp of the problems with which he had to deal, he at

the same time possessed the faculty of exposition, whereby the vital relation between the theoretical and the practical sides of Far Eastern politics was made plain. The student may thus draw his lessons equally from the actions and the reflections of this great official.

The life history of Sir Rutherford Alcock is that of the progressive development of a sterling character making in all circumstances the most of itself, self-reliant, self-supporting, without friends or fortune, without interest or advantage of any kind whatsoever. From first to last the record is clear, without sediment or anything requiring to be veiled or extenuated. Every achievement, great or small, is stamped with the hall-mark of duty, of unfaltering devotion to the service of the nation and to the interests of humanity.

A copious and facile writer, he has left singularly little in the way of personal history. The only journal he seems ever to have kept was consigned by him to oblivion, a few early dates and remarks having alone been rescued. When in recent years he was approached by friends on the subject of autobiography, he was wont to reply, "My life is in my work; by that I am content to be remembered." We must needs therefore take him at his word and judge by the fruit what was the nature of the tree.

In the following work the reader may trace in more or less continuous outline the stages by which the present relation between China and foreign nations has been reached. In the earlier portion the course of events indicated is comparatively simple, being confined to Anglo-Chinese developing into Anglo-Franco-

Chinese relations. In the latter portion, corresponding roughly with the second volume, the stream becomes subdivided into many collateral branches, as all the Western nations and Japan, with their separate interests, came to claim their share, each in its own way, of the intercourse with China. It is hoped that the data submitted to the reader will enable him to draw such conclusions as to past transactions as may furnish a basis for estimating future probabilities.

The scope of the work being restricted to the points of contact between China and the rest of the world, nothing recondite is attempted, still less is any enigma solved. It is the belief of the author that the so-called Chinese mystery has been a source of needless mystification; that the relation between China and the outer world was intrinsically simple; and that to have worked from the basis of their resemblances to the rest of humanity would have been a shorter way to an amicable understanding with the Chinese than the crude attempt to accommodate Western procedure to the uncomprehended differences which divided them. It needed no mastery of their sociology to keep the Chinese strictly to their written engagements and to deter them from outrage. But discussion was the invitation to laxity; and laxity, condoned and pampered, then defiant and triumphant, lies at the root of the disasters which have befallen the Chinese Empire itself, and now threaten to recoil also upon the foreign nations which are responsible for them. This responsibility was never more tersely summed up than by Mr Burlingame in his capacity of Chinese Envoy. After sounding the Foreign Office that astute diplomatist was able to inform the Tsungli-Yamên in 1869 that "the

British Government was so friendly and pacific that they would endure anything." The dictum, though true, was fatal, and the operation of it during thirty subsequent years explains most that has happened during that period, at least in the relations between China and Great Britain.

A word as to the orthography may be useful to the reader. The impossibility of transliterating Chinese sounds into any alphabetical language causes great confusion in the spelling of names. A uniform system would indeed be most desirable, but common practice has already fixed so many of them that it seems better, in a book intended for general reading, not to depart too much from the conventional usage, or attempt to follow any scientific system, which must, after all, be based upon mispronunciation of the Chinese sounds.

As regards personal names, it may be convenient to call attention to the distinction between Chinese and Manchu forms. In the case of the former the custom is to write the *nomen*, or family name, separately, and the *pre-nomen* (which by Chinese practice becomes the *post-nomen*) by itself, and, when it consists of two characters, separated by a hyphen—*e.g.*, Li (*nomen*) Hung-chang (*post-nomen*). In the case of Manchus, who are known not by a family name, but by what may be termed, for want of a better expression, their *pre-nomen*, it is customary to write the name in one word, without hyphens—for example, Kiying, Ilipu. As the Chinese name usually consists of three characters or syllables, and the Manchu usually of two, the form of name affords a *prima facie* indication of the extraction of the personage

referred to. Polysyllabic names, as San-ko-lin-sin, are generally Mongol.

The sovereign is not referred to by name, the terms Kwanghsu, Tungchih, and so forth, being the Chinese characters chosen to designate, or, as we might say, idealise the reign, in the same way as impersonal titles are selected for houses of business.

I desire to express my deep obligation to Sir Rutherford Alcock's stepdaughter Amy, Lady Pelly, without whose efficient aid the book could not have been compiled. It is a subject of regret to all concerned that Lady Alcock herself did not live to see the completion of a task in the inception of which she took a keen and loving interest.

To the other friends who have in different ways helped in the production of the book, and particularly to Mr William Keswick, M.P., for the loan of his valuable Chinnery and Crealock drawings, my best thanks are due.

A. M.

LONDON, *November 2nd*, 1900.

Postscript.—The legend on the front cover is a paraphrase of Chapter xxiii., Book xv., of the Analects of Confucius, Dr Legge's translation of which has been adopted by me as the motto of these volumes.

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THE ENGLISHMAN IN CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARMY SURGEON.

I. YOUTH.

Birth at Ealing—Motherless childhood—Feeble health—Irregular schooling—Medical education—Student days in Paris—Wax-modelling—Admission to College of Surgeons—House Surgeon at Westminster Hospital.

Born in the same year as Mr Gladstone, May 1809, John Rutherford Alcock[1] predeceased that statesman by only six months. His birthplace was Ealing, and he died in Westminster, after a residence there in retirement of twenty-seven years. Being a delicate infant, he was baptised in Ealing church when one day old. His childhood was deprived of its sunshine by the loss of his mother, and it does not appear that his father, a medical man of some note, and an artist to boot, was equal to filling the void in the young life. Consequently boyhood had for him none of the halo of a golden age, but was, on the contrary, a grey and cheerless memory,

[1] He dropped the "John" so early in life that he was never known by it.

furnishing tests of hardihood rather than those glowing aspirations which generally kindle young ambitions.

His early life was passed with relatives in the north of England, and he went to school at Hexham, where he had for companions Sir John Swinburne and Mr Dawson Lambton.

Of his school-days there is little to remark. Indeed his early education seems to have been most irregular, having been subject to long and frequent interruptions on account of ill-health, which necessitated sea-voyages and other changes of air. Nevertheless the diligence which was part of his nature compensated for these drawbacks of his youth, and set its seal on his whole after-career.

On returning to his father's house at the age of fifteen, the boy began his medical education, being, according to the fashion of the day, apprenticed to his father, and at the same time entered as a student at the Westminster Hospital and the Royal Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital under that distinguished surgeon, G. J. Guthrie. His passion for art had already asserted itself, and he was enabled to indulge it by constant visits to Chantrey's studio, where, "amid the musical sounds of the chisel on the marble, with snatches of airs from the workmen, where all breathed a calm and happy repose, he passed delightful hours." His half-holidays were spent at Chantrey's in modelling.

In the following year he visited Paris, and seems ever after to have looked back on the gay city as a kind of paradise, for there the world first really opened to the young man of sixteen. Then began that life of work and enjoyment, so blended as to be inseparable, which continued without intermission for more than seventy years. In the stimulating atmosphere of Paris,

and its free and independent life, the boy's faculties rapidly developed. He seemed, indeed, to expand suddenly into full manhood. Destined for the medical profession, he worked hard at anatomy, chemistry, and natural history, while taking also a keen interest in artistic and literary subjects; mastered French and Italian; and, in short, turned his twelve or eighteen months' sojourn to highly practical account.

From a small pocket-book containing notes of the journey to France, and part of his work in Paris, we give some extracts illustrative of the boy's character and powers of observation.

It was on the 17th of August 1825 that the party embarked at the Custom-House Stairs for Calais, the voyage occupying fourteen hours. On landing the lad "amused himself by observing the effects in the sky and the sea, and by picking up shells, bones of birds and animals, which having remained in the sea until perfectly clean, looked beautiful and white as ivory." Simple things interested him, and after dinner at the Hôtel Meurice in Paris he "listened with much pleasure to a man playing airs on what he called an American flute"—which he goes on to describe: "The tones were mellow in the extreme, and the airs he played I think were much superior in sweetness to any I have ever heard from an instrument so clear," and so on. Obviously a subjective impression; it is his own emancipation that beautifies the simplest things and inspires the simplest sounds. Like the convalescent in Gray—

> "The meanest floweret of the vale,
> The simplest note that swells the gale,
> The common sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening Paradise."

On his first Sunday in Paris he was "much struck

with the beauty of the paintings and a great number of pieces sculptured in *bas-relief*." Then he walked in the gardens of the Tuileries, "which in extent, in statues and in fountains, in the appearance of it taking it altogether, far exceeded anything my imagination had conceived concerning it."

At Versailles he was "highly delighted with many of the paintings. The gardens are extremely extensive and the fountains very numerous; . . . but it is all extremely artificial, and therefore soon fatigues the eye." In these slight observations are perceptible the artistic instinct and sense of fitness, faculties which served him so admirably in his future work, and might have won him distinction in other fields than those in which his lot was ultimately cast.

He was in Paris for a serious purpose, the study of medicine and surgery, and seriously he followed it. At the same time he mixed freely in the artistic and literary society of the French capital, and left none of his talents uncultivated. A characteristic incident in his educational career was his mastering the art of modelling in wax and in plaster. Following up his experiments in Chantrey's studio, he took regular lessons in Paris, and attained such proficiency that, young as he was, he was able to maintain himself while in that city by the sale of his anatomical models. For one of these he mentions receiving fifty guineas, and a few years after "for two arms and two legs the size of life" he notes receiving 140 guineas. These also won for him distinctions at home, for in the year 1825 he was awarded the "Gold Isis Medal" of the Society of Arts, and in the following year the "large gold medal" of that society, for original models in

coloured wax. And it may be mentioned as characteristic that although in later years an active member of that society, Sir H. T. Wood, the secretary, who knew him well, was unaware of Sir Rutherford Alcock's having so early in life received the society's medals. "The fact is an interesting one," he says, "and I am glad to have had my attention drawn to it." Some of these works were preserved in the Museum of the College of Surgeons, while others, prepared in special wax, were bought by Government for the use of the Indian medical schools.

From the small pocket-book to which we have already referred, and which contains concise notes of his course of instruction in modelling under a M. Dupont, we extract the note of his first lesson. It shows thoroughness of mind, keenness of observation, and the instinct for accuracy which enabled him so soon to attain to excellence in the art, and led to success in all the other pursuits of his life:—

Sept. 1.—To-day my first lesson in modelling began. I saw M. Dupont work upon a mask of a little boy's face in wax. He opened the eyes, but did not in my opinion make them quite correct. The only thing I observed in particular was his using oil very freely with his tool. I afterwards saw three moulds of a thigh near the hip after amputation, cast in wax. One was soaked in water, another was rubbed with soft-soap, and a third was well oiled. The one that was oiled produced the most perfect cast, but I should have thought both water, soap, and oil were used much too freely. They were all cast in wax of a deep red colour, and one of them was placed in the stump of one of the thighs of the model on which M. Dupont was engaged. It was not quite large enough for the thigh in some places, and too large in others. This he altered without scruple, so that when the stump was finished, though it looked extremely natural, it was by no means accurate.

Before quitting the life in Paris the following sample of its popular amusements as they presented themselves to the young student may be interesting to readers, and it is unfortunately the last entry in the pocket-book, and almost the last assistance we shall get from journals during the seventy years of crowded life which followed :—

I went yesterday [Sunday, September 10, 1826] to the Swiss Mountain, very extensive gardens on the Boulevards, where the most respectable part of the pleasure-seeking Parisians assemble on Sunday: you pay ten sous admittance. Here there is a large establishment for dinners where you may dine as at the restaurateurs, in a public room, or there are a long suite of apartments for parties of four, six, or twelve each, looking out into the gardens, and immediately before the windows was the space enclosed by trees, which form a canopy over it, and which is allotted to dancing. On one side is the orchestra; and when I heard it there was a very excellent band of musicians in it. It was rather unfavourable weather, as there were in the course of the day several very heavy showers, yet there seemed to be a very great number of elegantly dressed females and respectable-looking men; and some even highly-dressed, which is a wonder, I think, for the gentlemen in Paris seem to dress as much inferior to us as the French ladies dress better than the English. Indeed it is quite delightful to see the great taste with which they dress and the elegance of contour in all their figures. I don't know how it happens, but I never recollect seeing a French woman that was at all above the lowest class of society that was a slovenly or slattern figure, and very few that were not really elegant, though their faces are, generally speaking, plain.

After having dined I went to see the Swiss Mountain, which had made a noise whilst I was at dinner that very much resembled distant thunder. I had no idea what it was; my surprise may therefore be conceived when, on coming suddenly in sight of it, I saw a man, apparently sitting on a chair, whirl past me with a velocity more resembling the speed of lightning than anything I had before seen,—so much so, that though from the top to the bottom where they drop might be about

200 feet, I had merely time to perceive that there was a man seated on some sort of vehicle like a chair.

The mountain consisted of boards raised at an angle of about from 60° to 70° with the ground, and gradually becoming level. The distance from where they set off to where they stop I have before stated, I think, to be about 200 feet.

This platform is sufficiently broad to allow three of the vehicles to go down and one to return up at the same time—that is to say, there are four iron grooves accurately fitted to the small wheels on which the vehicles move. There are horses as well as chairs for both ladies and gentlemen. I saw several gentlemen on horseback and one lady. The horses appear to me to be real horses' hides, perhaps covering a wooden horse. They are accoutred with saddle, stirrups, and bridle. One person who came down on one of these horses rose and fell in his stirrups as though riding a real horse; it created much laughter, and the people surrounding immediately called out "Un Anglais! un Anglais!" I believe he was an Englishman. It had a ridiculous effect to observe the anxiety depicted on the countenances of the heroes, and compare them, with the knowledge of their perfect safety, with the laughing groups that surrounded them. Sometimes a veteran hero would mount one of the horses and come down with triumph in his countenance; the effect then became still more ridiculous, for he seemed like a great baby mounted on a hobby-horse proportionately large. But so it is through life, I think; one sees people capable of being elated as much by actions little in themselves, but enlarged for the instant by circumstances, as, for instance, in this case—the rapidity of motion, the gay crowd, and the distant music—as they would have been by an action really great in itself but unembroidered by outward show.

Hearing the music and wishing to see the dancing I had heard so much of, I approached the dancers. We read that the French enjoy dancing with great zest; certes, to see them dance a quadrille, one would not say so: 'tis true it is a dance in which custom has forbidden much exertion, still the entire listlessness they show induced me to think it was a task rather than a pleasure. But when a lively waltz struck up and the waltzing began, I . . .

Here the notes break off.

Of the student's life of four years from 1828 to 1832 there is little which can or need be said. For two years and a half out of the four he was house surgeon at the Westminster Hospital and the Ophthalmic Hospital, having received, at the age of twenty-one, the diploma from the Royal College to practise surgery. During this period he continued modelling, and took pupils in that art. Writing for periodicals also occupied some of his leisure time.

No sooner was his student career ended than an opening presented itself which determined the future course of his life, but in a way very different from what could possibly have been anticipated.

II. THE PENINSULA, 1832–1837.

Dynastic quarrel in Portugal—Foreign legion—Mr Alcock enters the service, 1832—Character of the force and its leaders—Colonel Shaw—Incidents of the campaign—Important medical services of Mr Alcock—Joins the Spanish Foreign Legion, 1836—Termination of the campaign.

There were troubles in Portugal. The usurper Dom Miguel was on the throne. It was proposed to seat the rightful sovereign, Donna Maria, there—her father, Dom Pedro, ex-Emperor of Brazil, who assumed the title of Duke of Braganza, heading the movement.

Sympathy was excited in France and England, in both of which countries irregular forces were levied to co-operate with the constitutional party in Portugal led by his imperial majesty. It was a kind of service which tempted alike young bloods and old soldiers who had been languishing in peace and idleness since 1815,

and a small army of "Liberators" was got together in England, with a corresponding naval force.

It has been mentioned that young Alcock had studied under the eminent army surgeon Guthrie. Feelings of regard had sprung up between the two which extended far beyond the professional sphere. Not only had the boy been a favourite pupil whose aptitude reflected credit on his teacher, but it is quite evident that a personal affection which lasted their respective lifetimes was rekindled during the years they subsequently spent together in Westminster. When, therefore, Mr Guthrie was applied to by Mr O'Meara, who had been in attendance on Napoleon at St Helena, to recommend a surgeon for the British-Portuguese force, Guthrie sent at once for Alcock and discussed with him his professional prospects. The upshot was that as, considering his youth,—he was then only twenty-two,—it was useless for him to think of beginning practice in London, a few years might be most advantageously passed in military service abroad. The young man was only too eager to close with the offer then made to him, which not only afforded the prospect of active professional work, but seemed to open the way for adventures such as the soul of a young man loveth. Within twenty-four hours of accepting the offer Alcock was on the way to Portsmouth and the Azores. For some time after his arrival there he did duty on board ship. His ambition being cramped by this restricted service, however, he was anxious to be transferred to the military force. He accordingly applied to Colonel Hodges, who commanded the marine battalion, to be taken on his

staff. The colonel looked at him with some hesitation owing to his extremely youthful appearance, but on hearing that he had been specially recommended by Guthrie, said, "Oh, that is a different matter; come along."

Of the Peninsular expeditions of 1832-37 the interest for the present generation lies less in their origin, aims, and results, than in their conduct and incidents. They were episodes which have left no marks on the general course of history visible to the ordinary observer, and are memorable chiefly for their dramatic effects, the play of character, the exhibitions of personal courage, capacity, and devotion; of jealousy, intrigue, and incapacity; of love and hate; and of the lights and shadows that flit across the theatre of human life. Interferences in other people's quarrels naturally bring to the surface all the incongruities. The auxiliaries are sure to be thought arrogant whether they are really so or not, and the *protégés* are no less certain to be deemed ungrateful. Each party is apt to underestimate the exploits of the other and to exaggerate his own. They take widely different views of the conditions under which their respective services are rendered; they misconstrue each other's motives, assessing them at their lowest apparent value. Each side looks for certain sentimental acknowledgments from the other, while daily frictions and inevitable misunderstandings continually embitter the disappointment felt at their absence. And there are not two parties, but many. There are wheels within wheels; sections playing on each other tricks which savour of treachery on the one side, while on the other side there may be sulks which are constructive mutiny.

The question of pay is naturally a constant source of bitterness, for countries that need foreign assistance are impecunious and dilatory. Few of them would be entitled to the certificate which Dugald Dalgetty gave to his excellent paymasters, the Dutch. Yet in spite of drawbacks, there is a kind of method in the whole business, a movement towards a goal, though at a maximum of cost, with the greatest waste and the most poignant regrets over mismanagement.

But what in these irregular campaigns is so remarkable as to be almost repugnant to common reason is the devotion of the mercenary soldier. This inspiriting sentiment, which springs up spontaneously like a wild-flower in desert places, seems to put patriotism in the shade as a motive for sacrifice. The hired soldier, though an alien, is often indeed more faithful than the son of the soil, perhaps for the reason that his allegiance is of a simpler nature, more categorical and explicit. The direct personal character of such alien allegiance and its transferability are exemplified in the lives of soldiers of fortune in general: never better, perhaps, than in the wild and dangerous career of Alexander Gardner, colonel of artillery in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, whose Memoirs have been recently edited by Major Hugh Pearse. Is it the fighting instinct, hereditary heroism, or military discipline that makes the soldier? Is it the cause that inspires him, or is it only devotion to his immediate leader? Explain it how we may, the British Legion both in Portugal and in Spain maintained the character of their race for pluck and tenacity as well as if they had been fighting for their own king and country. And this is rendered still

more remarkable when the promiscuous manner of their muster is considered. Clandestine engagements in the slums of Soho, under the guise of labour or emigrant contracts, in evasion of the Foreign Enlistment Acts; surreptitious journeys, as "hop-pickers," to Gravesend; secret embarkations under cover of night; and the disciplining of a mob composed of the dregs of the streets, afford subject of some graphic and humorous descriptions on the part of the officers concerned in raising the squad and licking them into shape. It must have required a very sanguine faith in the radical qualities of the stock for any officer of repute to consent to "march through Coventry" with such a herd of scalliwags.

The officer who seems to have had a principal share in collecting these raw levies, and distinguished himself in both campaigns in the Peninsula, in which he bore a leading part, has left us some racy descriptions of the force and its experiences in the field. Sir Charles Shaw was himself a typical soldier by nature and by practice. Circumstances alone would determine whether it should be as a soldier of fortune, a patriot defending hearths and homes, or as an Ishmaelite adventurer, that his sword would be unsheathed. The sporting and adventurous instinct scents danger afar, like the war-horse in the book of Job which laughs at the spears. The manner in which he came to embrace the profession of arms was itself so characteristic as to deserve mention.

As a youth he was passionately devoted to sport, and when that momentous question the choice of a profession came up for consideration, sport decided it in favour of law, for the somewhat original reason

that the young gentleman had observed that lawyers seemed to enjoy the longest holidays! He had begun his studies, and was on his way to St Andrews to enter on a new course when an incident occurred which diverted the current of his thoughts. He met a batch of French prisoners of war being removed from one garrison to another, whose misery affected him so much that he was instantly seized with the idea of becoming a soldier. The particular form in which the inspiration took him was that he put himself in the position of one of these prisoners and imagined himself the hero of his own and his comrades' deliverance.

His studies at St Andrews, perturbed by the new passion, made indifferent progress. The historic golf-links afforded some relief, acting as a kind of neutral soothing medium between antagonistic aspirations. But the final solution of his troubles came from a famous piece of water which is there, called the Witches' Pond. The virtue of this water was great in the barbaric age when the curse of witchcraft lay heavy on the land. The suspected person was thrown into the water. If she floated, her guilt was proven and she was incontinently burned; if she sank, it proved the high specific gravity of flesh and bone. Happy thought! The young man would subject his life's destiny to this convenient ordeal. He would jump into the pond, and either sink as a lawyer or emerge as a soldier!

After this original form of baptism, initiation into the mysteries soon followed, and the young soldier saw much active service during the Napoleonic wars in the Peninsula and in the Low Countries. He

missed Waterloo through being on other duty, and in the piping times of peace which followed that decisive battle an idyllic life at Richmond seemed to bound the horizon of his unsatisfied ambition for some fifteen years. From a totally unexpected quarter the call to arms reached him in his retreat, and suddenly roused all his sleeping energies. The offer of a commission in the service of the young Queen of Portugal met with an eager response, and Shaw entered heart and soul into the service of Donna Maria.

As well as being an active soldier, Major Shaw was a lively correspondent, and it is from his letters to his family that we get the most brilliant flash-lights on the incidents of his military career generally, and more particularly on that exciting portion of it which most concerns the subject of these volumes. These letters were edited and published by himself at the close of the operations in Spain.

Colonel Hodges, who commanded the foreign brigade in Portugal, and seems to have left the queen's service in a huff, also published a narrative of the campaign, of which, however, the historical value is not enhanced by its apologetic and explanatory motive.

From the contemporary notes of these two officers we get generous and emphatic testimony to the manner in which Mr Alcock acquitted himself under the ordeal of severe military service. Indeed his comrades and commanding officers, first in Portugal and afterwards in Spain, seem to have vied with each other in spontaneous eulogy of the conduct of the young surgeon, none of them more flattering than General De Lacy Evans, who commanded in

Spain. It is the record of a hero and a philanthropist, of high military ardour subordinated to still higher duty both to the cause he was serving and to the comrades whose lives were under his care. The valour of a non-combatant makes no less a demand on the virile stamina than the valour of the soldier,—oftentimes indeed more, since he lacks the stimulus of active conflict and confronts danger passive and unarmed. A few extracts from these really remarkable testimonials may still be read with pleasure after the lapse of sixty years.

Shaw writes to his family :—

A peasant led the way (they wear no shoes and their feet are like hands). I took off my shoes, and after getting down about fifty yards, I looked up and saw a favourite soldier of mine close above me, and an intimate friend of Ramus, the assistant-surgeon Alcock (a nice young fellow), following. I ordered the soldier to halt; but his answer of, "I'll follow your honour to death, captain," made me silent. I tried military authority with young Alcock, as I saw he was much excited; but no, his professional services were, he thought, required, and follow he would. Every moment expecting he would roll down, I clasped my toes and fingers close to the precipice, that he might fall without sweeping me with him: such is selfish nature! Two or three times I determined to return, but the soldier's speech forced me on. We reached the bottom in about half an hour, and, believe me, I returned thanks.

I proceeded along the rocky beach, and there found poor Ramus lying on a rock, in a sleeping position, with all his clothes torn, and a dreadful gash in his head; his body all broken; but with an expression of countenance indicating he had suffered no pain. I was astonished to see him without his shoes; but in ascending a sharp rock I found them, with the marks where his heels had caught as he tumbled backwards head foremost. Finding that our descent had been useless, I told those who had come down that I would not allow them

to risk their lives in ascending, and sent off a peasant to get a boat; but he failed both in this and in getting ropes to pull us up. Self again stepped in, and as senior I led the way—one great reason being that no one could tumble back on me! I reached the top—hands torn and feet bruised; and to my joy young Alcock made his appearance, but so faint that I was obliged to supply him liberally with my brandy.

The duty which now had to be performed by the medical men was of the most arduous character. The surgeon of the British battalion, Souper, carried away by the military spirit instilled into him by being an actor in the "Three Days of July," resigned his commission as surgeon, and on this day commenced and finished his military career, being killed at Hodges' side while carrying orders to the French battalion. His place was filled up by Mr Rutherford Alcock, who had the same love for "fire," but for a different object—that of being close at hand to give prompt assistance to any one who was wounded. Although young, Alcock was old in knowledge and experience: he was highly respected by all who knew him, and beloved by those who entered into action, as they felt assured that he thought not of his own safety when his services could be of benefit to them. In the most exposed situations I saw him this day, dressing officers and men with the same coolness as if he were in a London hospital; and I cannot refrain from expressing envy at the gratified feeling he must ever possess when he thinks of the number of human beings he has saved by his knowledge, experience, bravery, and activity, both at Oporto, Vittoria, and St Sebastian. But his trials after the fight of the 29th of September were great.

Owing to the fights of Pennafiel, Ponte Fereira, and the different affairs on the Lugar das Antas, the wards allotted to the British in the general hospitals were full; therefore, one may form some idea of the misery of the British when scattered among the different hospitals, speaking a language which was not understood. Measures were taken by Hodges and Alcock to gather the wounded foreigners together, but the Minister of War threw every impediment in the way of this; almost making one suspect, that now that the soldier had done his work and was useless, the sooner he died the better.

Truth compels me to state a fact I should wish to avoid, but it is right that those who are to be soldiers should know

the value that is sometimes put upon their services. The words were made use of by Dom Pedro, but from what I have seen of him, I think others must have at the moment prompted him. The medical man was mentioning that it would be necessary to amputate the legs and arms of some of the British. "No, no," said Dom Pedro, "you British are fond of amputations, because your men are to have pensions, and that is expensive."

No application from myself as commanding the battalion; from Alcock, as senior medical officer; nor from Hodges, as the representative of the foreigners, had any effect on Augustinho José Freire: thus the poor fellows, crowded together, without beds, without nurses, without clothes, and even without medicines, died in numbers.

The references to Alcock's services are so frequent in these letters, so unconventional and spontaneous, as to prove the deep and lasting impression the young surgeon had made on his companions in arms. "I am glad for all your sakes to tell you that my wounds have healed in an extraordinary manner. . . . I consider myself greatly indebted to Alcock both for his skill and attention." And at the close of the Portuguese campaign: "I wonder if Alcock knows that he has got the decoration of the Tower and Sword? No man in the service deserves it more, both for bravery and kindness to the wounded." "The scarcity of medicines was dreadful; but with the active and willing assistance of Alcock, and the Portuguese medical gentlemen, it is quite wonderful what has been accomplished."

The bad condition of the hospitals at Oporto is the burden of many references in both Shaw's letters and Hodges' more formal narrative; and as the only records of the campaign from Alcock's own pen happen to be in official documents connected with

the medical service, we give *in extenso* one of his despatches, showing in an inexperienced boy of twenty-three a maturity of judgment and a broad grasp of duty, with, what is perhaps more important, a mastery of work, that would not discredit a veteran.

OPORTO, *Sept.* 20, 1832.

SIR,—The danger to which the patients were found to be exposed by the fire of the enemy caused their removal to a place of greater safety, where they might at least have nothing to fear from the enemy's shells. This change in the arrangements, however, has been in other respects extremely disadvantageous to the sick and wounded men. They are now crowded from the higher parts of the building into the corridors and ground-floors—a situation well known to be unfavourable to the recovery of sick men, from the air being so much less pure. Our own men, including the English sailors, have been placed in one ward, which, though of tolerably large dimensions, is very far from affording the necessary space and quantum of air required for forty-eight or fifty patients, which for some time has been the average—an average which we may rather expect to see increased than diminished during the approaching wet season. Moreover, from peculiar localities, it is quite impossible efficiently to ventilate the room, or to ensure a free circulation of air, which is as essential as any other means employed for the recovery of health.

It is under these circumstances that I feel not only authorised, but bound in duty, to draw your attention to the subject; assured that in any measures proposed for the benefit or well-being of the men under your command it is only necessary to show they are really required to meet your cordial support. Many difficulties, and many disadvantageous arrangements, have always attended the treatment of the patients in the present establishment; but these last compulsory changes, when added to the former state, place my patients in too dangerous a position to allow me to be silent or inactive. Situated as we are, I cannot promise the speedy recovery of any of the gunshot wounds, nor indeed of the sick generally, and their liability to any of the epidemics unfortunately so common in crowded hospitals renders me exceedingly anxious

to have some steps taken to place them in a more favourable position.

The means I have to submit for your consideration and approval are, I believe and hope, extremely feasible. I desire to have some large dwelling-house appropriated for the reception of all English and French sick and wounded, by which means the General Hospital would be relieved of nearly a hundred patients, and of those, moreover, who, from the difference of language, are a fruitful and constant source of trouble and inconvenience—nay, more, of irregularity as prejudicial to the patients as it is discreditable to a military establishment of such importance. Many houses well adapted for this purpose might easily be mentioned, already at the disposal of the Government by the flight of the owners. One I could point out at this moment which, from a superficial inspection, I believe might be advantageously appropriated—a corner house in the Praça de St Ildefonso, adjoining the church.

The advantages which would accrue from this arrangement cannot for a moment be counterbalanced by the trouble or difficulty of first organising the separate establishment. The patients could then be classed and placed in different rooms, and not, as now, promiscuously crowded together—surgical and medical, fevers and amputations; by which arrangement their liability to any epidemic would be exceedingly diminished, while the patients would be more immediately under the eye and control of the medical attendants. Both surgeon and patient would thus be placed under more favourable circumstances, and the general service much facilitated by the removal of foreign troops from an establishment entirely Portuguese.

In glancing at the advantages, I should omit one of very great importance if I did not submit to you the facility it would afford for the good treatment of wounded and sick officers. Instead of being attended at their own quarters, often just within the first line, to their own great risk and the inconvenience of the surgeon, they would be removed to a place of safety, and where, moreover, from being entirely under medical command, their rank would procure them none of those injurious indulgences in the way of diet, &c., which even the wisest of us are apt to risk the enjoyment of when in our power. They might easily enjoy every necessary

comfort, while they would be carefully guarded from all imprudent excess.

The chief difficulties I foresee, and which I have no doubt will immediately present themselves to your mind, appear to me very far from insurmountable. I require the assistance of no Portuguese officer whatever, except a commissary or purveyor, on whom I can *fully depend,* for the due and regular supply of fuel, meat, wine, fowls, and such other articles as are required for the good treatment of the patients, and which are daily supplied to the General Hospital. This is of the greatest importance, as any irregularity in this branch of the service would not only cripple my efforts, but be of serious injury to all under my care. In addition to this I should require one Portuguese domestic to every fifteen cases, for the purpose of cooking, washing the linen, keeping the wards clean, and such other menial duties as are independent of those appertaining to the orderlies. The expense of a separate establishment ought to be, and would be, of the most trifling kind. The same beds, trussels, and utensils, now exclusively appropriated to us, would be equally serviceable in any other hospital. Two or three boilers, and a few cooking utensils, with a slipper bath, are really the chief and most expensive things required. I may safely leave it to you, sir, to decide if this can cause any grievous outlay.

Should it be any convenience, or be deemed by you, sir, advantageous to the service, to the English and French might be added the wounded Portuguese soldiers of your brigade. I have little more to add, but should you require further detail, I beg to refer to a letter addressed to Major Shaw on this subject. I am fully conscious and aware of the labour I am entailing on myself, and that which is still more irksome, the heavy responsibility, but I have a duty to perform. I neither court the labour nor desire the responsibility; but if they come as a consequence of my efforts to do that duty I can look steadfastly on them, and I trust I have energy and perseverance enough to do all that depends upon me in spite of them. My most ardent wish is to prove myself worthy of the confidence you have honoured me with, and the trust conferred upon me.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient humble servant,

RUTHERFORD ALCOCK.

To Colonel HODGES,
commanding Foreign Brigade, &c., &c.

As the campaign in defence of the Queen of Portugal closed, that in defence of the Queen Christina of Spain opened, and their rough experiences in the former did not deter either Colonel Shaw or Surgeon Alcock from accepting service in the Spanish Legion organised and commanded by De Lacy Evans. "On my arrival in London," writes Shaw in 1836, "you may suppose how delighted I was to find my friend Alcock at the head of the medical department, as his experiences in difficulties made him decidedly the most proper man." As it is no part of our plan to trace the operations, we give one characteristic letter from Colonel Shaw. It is dated San Sebastian, 2 o'clock, May 6, 1836:—

MY DEAR MOTHER.—The steamer is detained, so I write to you once more. I and my brigade are so fatigued and cut up that we have been allowed to return here for the night. We had a terrible morning's work of it, the brigade having lost, in killed and wounded, about 400 men and 27 officers; others not so much. How I escaped I know not; kind Providence was my protector. My watch is smashed, the ball having cut through cloak, coat, trousers, drawers, and shirt, and only bruised me. A spent ball hit me on the chest, and my gaiter was cut across by another. We had dreadful lines to force: very steep, vomiting fire; and the clay up to our ankles made us so slow that they picked as they chose. The enemy not only behaved well behind their lines, but charged out, and twice or thrice put us for a moment in confusion. Alcock is slightly wounded.

And as an agreeable pendant to the severe strictures on the state of the Portuguese hospitals, the following may fitly close our extracts from these racy records of arduous military adventure:—

BAYONNE, *September* 1836.

When you land, introduce yourself to my friend Alcock, and beg him to take you through the hospitals. You will, or I am

greatly mistaken, be agreeably surprised by the prevailing cleanliness and regularity, as also the care and attendance bestowed on the sick and wounded. Alcock has had a most difficult card to play. He knows well that there are many disabled poor fellows who, if they were in the British service, would be sent to England, certain of receiving their pensions; but he is also aware that a poor fellow sent to England from the service of Queen Christina, instead of receiving his pension, is generally left to starve. It is therefore from a praiseworthy charity that he keeps many in hospital, under his own eye, in order that they may in this manner get as much as will keep body and soul together.

Mr Alcock retired from military service in 1837 with the rank of Deputy-Inspector of Hospitals, having received the Order of the Tower and Sword together with the war medal of the three years' service in Portugal, and the Cross of the Order of Charles III. and Commander's Cross of Isabella the Catholic, with medals for the two principal actions against the Carlists.

The six years of Peninsular experiences he declared to have been "the most stirring and attractive of his life," and in some portions of that period he had "more complete personal gratification and material happiness than could be safely anticipated in the future." He was now to have six years of quite a different experience, which led up to the turning-point in his life.

III. ENGLAND, 1838–1844.

Returns to England, 1838—Alcock resumes professional work—Prize essays and publications—Sir James Paget's testimonial—A Commissioner for adjusting Peninsular claims—Appointed Inspector of Anatomy, 1842—Imperfections of the Anatomy Act—Marriage to Miss Bacon, 1841—His enforced abandonment of a surgical career.

On his return to England in 1838 Alcock at once resumed the work of his profession. In that year he published in a small 8vo volume 'Notes on the Medical History and Statistics of the British Legion of Spain'; and in 1839, and again in 1841, he carried off the Jacksonian prizes of the Royal College of Surgeons awarded for the best essays on subjects selected by the Council. The first of these was "On Concussion or Commotion of the Brain"; the second, "On Injuries of the Thorax and Operations on its Parietes"; and naturally the value of the papers lay in the extent to which the author was able to draw on his own observation and experience of gunshot wounds during his seven years of Peninsular service.

Of these contributions to medical literature Sir James Paget remarks that "they may make one regret that he was ever induced to give up the study of surgery. For they show an immense power of accurately observing and recording facts, and of testing his own and others' opinions by the help of all the knowledge of the facts possessed by others at that time. . . . I doubt whether in the first half of this century better essays on gunshot wounds of the head and of the thorax had been written."

And the small volume dealing with hospital ex-

periences in Spain has drawn from the same eminent authority the comment that "it tells in a most graphic and clear manner the difficulties which, sixty years ago, beset the practice of surgery and the care of troops during war. These difficulties may have been greater at that time in Spain than in any other country in Western Europe, and may be thought now impossible, but they may be read with great interest, and one cannot doubt that Sir Rutherford Alcock's true account of them helped to remedy them, . . . contributed to the improvement of the medical department of the army in this country."

Mr Alcock joined the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society in 1839, and was appointed Lecturer in Surgery at Sydenham College, where he delivered a series of lectures on complicated injuries, amputations, &c.

His professional labours were soon diversified by an employment which could scarcely have been consistent with a large practice, though in the beginning of his surgical career it might not seem to involve much sacrifice except of time. But it was arduous, onerous, and absolutely gratuitous. Great trouble had arisen between the Spanish Government and the Foreign Legion in regard to pay. No settlement could be obtained, and eventually a commission was appointed to examine and adjudicate the numerous claims, to which commission Mr Alcock was appointed by express and unanimous request of the general and the field officers of the corps. His qualifications for such an office were quite exceptional, for to first-rate business capacity, which had been shown in the campaign, he added a knowledge of the language and the country which was not common, and a character which com-

manded universal confidence. His work on this commission extended over two years, and was brought to a satisfactory termination in 1839.

No sooner were the labours of the Spanish commission concluded than Mr Alcock was, in 1840, appointed by the Foreign Office to a similar duty in an Anglo-Portuguese commission constituted by the two Governments to adjust the claims of British subjects who had served in the Miguelite war of 1832-35. The work of that commission also was satisfactorily accomplished in 1844, and, as in the Spanish commission, Mr Alcock's labours were given without remuneration, in order, as he said, that his judgment might be unbiassed.[1]

During the course of the Spanish commission Mr Alcock was, in 1842, appointed, on the strong recommendation of Sir Benjamin Brodie, to a post under the Home Office, that of Inspector of Anatomy. It would be distasteful and of no utility to rake up the circumstances which set on foot an agitation culminating in the passing of an Act of Parliament in 1832 known as "The Anatomy Act." Like many other Acts of legislature in this country, it was a compromise by which difficulties were sought to be evaded by cunningly devised phrases whereby the thing that was meant was so disguised as to appear to be something else. "The Act failed in two most important points; it failed in honesty, and was wanting in the extent of the powers conferred." In short, after ten years' trial the Act was becoming unworkable, and a reform in

[1] The only valuable consideration he received for these labours was bestowed some years later, when his entry into the service of the Foreign Office was ante-dated to 1840, so as to include the period of the Peninsular commissions.

its administration was imperatively demanded. It was at that critical moment that Mr Alcock was nominated as one of the two inspectors under the Act, and he entered on his duties with his well-proved practical energy. Before the end of the first year a long and interesting report was sent in by the inspectors, and we may judge by the sample of the Hospital Report in Oporto how thoroughly they exposed the difficulties and how practically they proposed to overcome them. A second report followed in 1843. But Government is a lumbering machine, always waiting for some stronger compulsion than a mere demonstration of what ought to be; and we are not surprised, therefore, to find fifteen years later, and fourteen after his connection with the Home Department had ceased, Mr Alcock still writing the most lucid and matter-of-fact memoranda on the conditions under which competent inspectors might be induced "to work a very imperfect Act of Parliament."

It was during the period under review that the most interesting episode in a young man's life occurred. On the 17th of May 1841, when he had just completed his thirty-second year, he was married to Miss Bacon, daughter of the sculptor of that name. The ceremony took place at St Margaret's, Westminster, Dean Milman, then a Canon of Westminster, officiating. His domestic bliss was unruffled, the couple being profoundly congenial.

But now "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream." The career which opened before the young surgeon was full of promise. So far as the personal factor was concerned, no man could have started

with a better equipment. There were efficiency, thoroughness, enthusiasm, courage, and common-sense; there were, as we have seen in the student days, manual dexterity and exactness and artistic power of no contemptible order; there was, in short, every attribute of an accomplished surgeon, who must in the course of nature rise to eminence. A chair of military surgery was ready for him at King's College, and an assistant-surgeonship at Westminster Hospital. All that, however, had to be sacrificed and a new departure taken, in consequence of an illness which left its mark in the form of paralysis of hands and arms, and thus put an end to "all dreams of surgical practice."

This malady was a legacy from the Peninsula. Like Cæsar, "he had a fever when he was in Spain," a rheumatic fever of a particularly severe type contracted at the siege of San Sebastian. This entailed indescribable pain and misery during many months, and, in spite of partial recoveries, seems to have left its after-effects seven years later in what he calls the "mysterious" affection in his hands. It was indeed considered remarkable that he should have survived an attack of so formidable a character. He never recovered the use of his thumbs, which marred the legibility of his writing to the end of his life.

His professional career being thus rudely closed, it might well have appeared to a man of thirty-five that his life was shipwrecked ere the voyage was well begun. It would have been in accord with the short-sighted judgment which men usually form of their own fortunes. But

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will;"—

and Alcock learned, what many before and since have learned, that prosperity and adversity oft visit men in disguise, and are liable to be mistaken the one for the other. Providence employs for its favourites an alchemy whereby the very ashes of their misery may be transmuted into pure gold; and what looks like disaster is but the rending of the veil which concealed a world of richer promise than that which they abandon with regret.

CHAPTER II.

SENT TO CHINA.

Importance of appointment—New position created by Treaty of Nanking —Exceptional responsibility of the new consuls—The evolution and scope of foreign intercourse—Pioneer traders—Mutual experiences of Chinese and foreigners — Results — English inheritors of the record — An intolerable state of things — Drastic remedy — Where it failed — Chasm between Eastern and Western ideas — Commerce alone supplied a safe medium of intercourse—Its healing qualities —But social and political concomitants created friction—Arbitrary interferences of Chinese Government — Their traditional mode of treating barbarians—Denial of human rights—Absence of law in their intercourse — Spasmodic resistance to Chinese tyranny aggravated the evils — East India Company submitted for the sake of gain—Close of the Company's charter — Followed by endeavour of British Government to establish official intercourse—Determined resistance of Chinese—Lord Napier, first British envoy, not received— Loaded with insults—Contradictory instructions given by British Government—To conciliate Chinese as in days of Company, and at same time to open diplomatic relations—Lord Napier's appeal to experience—His death at Macao—Captain Ellis, a third envoy, reverts to the policy of submission—Has no success.

WHEN thus thrown upon his beam-ends in 1844, an appointment was conferred on Mr Alcock which was not only honourable to him but creditable to the Government which selected him. He was among the five chosen to fill the office of consul in China under the treaty of Nanking, which had been concluded in 1842. And if any event in human life be deserving of

such distinction, the opening thus provided for the talents of Mr Alcock is on many grounds entitled to rank as providential. To the end of his days he himself recognised that his previous training had not been thrown away, but "had been unconsciously preparing him for the great work of his life." The Minister responsible for the appointment may be excused if, while selecting a man of proved capacity for a post of unknown requirements, he did not realise the full value of the service he was rendering to his country. Governments are not always so perspicacious in gauging the merits of the uncovenanted, and other nominations made under circumstances not dissimilar have shown how easily the efficiency of the candidate may be subordinated to considerations extraneous to the public weal.

The China consulates were a new creation, a venture into the unknown, a voyage without landmarks or chart, where success depended on the personal qualities of the pioneer navigators—their judgment, resourcefulness, and faculty of initiative. Great issues hung upon the opening of the new world of the Far East, the success of which was largely in the hands of the agents who were employed, for they were practically beyond the reach of instructions. There was no telegraph, and the so-called Overland Route to India was just beginning to be exploited for the conveyance of mails and passengers. Nor was it possible for even the wisest Government to frame general instructions providing for eventualities out of the range of common experience. The conditions of service were therefore such as to constitute an ordeal under which a bureaucratic official would shrivel into uselessness or worse,

while to a strong man they were a powerful stimulant, the very breath of life.

It was therefore a matter of serious consequence who should be intrusted with the actual inauguration of the new relations with China; and in the course of the present narrative it will probably appear that it was a happy accident by which the country lost one distinguished surgeon among many and gained in exchange a political representative whose services must be considered unique.

FOREIGN RELATIONS WITH CHINA.

To understand fully the state of our relations with China created by the treaty of Nanking, the whole history not only of our own commercial intercourse, but of that of the nations who were our forerunners in the Far East, would have to be kept in mind. For much as we tried and hoped then, and ever since, to confine the international question to a few bald propositions respecting trade, personal protection, and so forth, it is impossible to eliminate the historical, the human, and the general political elements from the problem. For both good and evil we are the necessary outcome of our own antecedents, as are the Chinese of theirs, and if we had acquired a stock of experience of the Chinese, no less had they of us; indeed, if we fairly consider the matter, theirs was the more comprehensive. For to the Chinese we represented not ourselves alone, nor the East India Company, nor a generation or two of timid traders, but Christendom as a whole—our Spanish, Portuguese,

and Dutch precursors, the Romish propaganda, and all the abortive missions to Peking.

For three centuries and more what may be called the foreign education of the Chinese had been proceeding: their habits were being formed in so far as their dealings with strangers were concerned, and their judgment was being trained by the authentic data with which they had been plentifully supplied. European intercourse, in short, had been one long lesson to the Chinese in the art of managing men from the West. Without meaning it, we had been teaching them how to treat us, just as we train animals to perform tricks; and the worst we can say of the Chinese is that they have bettered the instruction, to their loss perhaps as well as ours.

In the chronicles of that long history there are many deeds worthy of remembrance, as well as many of another hue, neither being confined to one side. There were good and bad among the early adventurers, as there are at all times in every other section of mankind. Of two brothers, for example, connected with the very early times, the first comer ingratiated himself with the Chinese, and left such a good impression behind him that the second was received with open arms: very soon, however, he abused the liberality of the natives, committing outrages upon them, which led ultimately to his forcible expulsion from the country and to restrictions on the outlets for trade. Taking it as a whole, the record of the pioneers in China is rather a despicable one, in which violence, cupidity, and cowardice formed large ingredients.

The English, as latest comers, being served heirs to

the turpitudes of all Europe, paid the penalty for the misdeeds and shortcomings of their predecessors and their neighbours, as well as for their own. The penalty was the intolerable degradation they had been made to endure, with ever-increasing aggravation, at the only port where they were permitted to trade—Canton.

As there are forms of impurity which can only be cleansed by fire, so there was no possible remedy for the miseries of Anglo-Chinese intercourse short of open war. The hostilities begun in 1839, and brought to a conclusion by the treaty of Nanking in 1842, were naturally held as a drastic liquidation of long-standing grievances and the harbinger of a new era of peace and mutual respect. Why even the decisive and one-sided war should have proved an inadequate solvent of the perennial strife may partly appear as our story proceeds.

The chasm between the Chinese and the Western world, as then represented by Great Britain, was in fact much too deep to be bridged over by any convention. Intercommunion between bodies so alien was as the welding of heterogeneous metals, contact without fusion. From one point of view, indeed, circumstances were highly favourable to a sympathetic attachment, for there is no safer medium of intercourse between nations than the commerce which blesses him that buys and him that sells. It was the pursuit of commerce alone that drew men from afar to the Asiatic coasts, and the reciprocal desire on the part of the natives which opened for the strangers, be it ever so little, the gates of the Chinese empire. The purely commercial relation left little to be desired on the side of mutual good-

will. The impression of it left on the mind of old residents in Canton is thus recorded by Mr W. C. Hunter, an American merchant, who lived there from 1824: "From the facility of all dealings with the Chinese who were assigned to transact business with us, together with their proverbial honesty, combined with a sense of perfect security to person and property, scarcely a resident of any lengthened time—in short, any 'Old Canton'—but finally left them with regret."

Mr Hunter goes further and testifies to the "vigilant care over the personal safety of strangers who came to live in the midst of a population whose customs and prejudices were so opposed to everything foreign."

Why, then, was it that on the ground-level of common material interest, and under the sunshine of the protection spontaneously accorded by authority, the parties failed in two hundred years to evolve between them a *modus vivendi?* The solution of this riddle can only be found in a patient survey of events both before and after the war.

It would carry us far beyond our limits even to summarise the history of foreign intercourse with China. Nor is such a task necessary, since our concern lies mainly with those later developments which culminated in the war of 1839-42, a glance at which seems essential to any fair appreciation of the sequel.

That there was no material cause of difference between the Chinese Government and people on the one hand and the foreign traders and their representatives on the other was made manifest by the persistence and continuous growth of their mutual commerce. And their common appreciation of the advantages of the trade is shown by the readiness

of each in turn to resort to the threat of stopping business as a means of pressure on the other side. It is not therefore the substance, but the accidents and conditions, of the intercourse that generated the friction which led through outrage to reprisals; and the two conditions most fruitful in conflict were the necessary absence of law and the inevitable incomprehension of each other's status.

Left to themselves, the traders on either side, though without law, would have been a law to themselves, both parties having been habituated to a discipline of custom more potent within its sphere than any code, commercial or penal. But as no problem in life can ever be isolated, so in this case the twofold interference of the State and the populace constantly obstructed the genial flow of commercial intercourse.

The interference of the Chinese bore no resemblance to the restrictions imposed on trade by Western Governments, for these, even when most oppressive, are usually specific and calculable. There is a tariff of duties, there are harbour and police regulations, and there are the laws of the land. The peculiarity of the Chinese official supervision of foreign trade was that it was incalculable and arbitrary, governed by cupidities and jealousies, and subject to individual caprice. Having barbarians to deal with, the Chinese authorities followed the maxims of their ancient kings and "ruled them by misrule, which is the true and the only way of ruling them." And finding the barbarians submissive, they grew accustomed to practise on them such indignities as a wanton schoolboy might inflict on a captive animal, unrestrained by any consideration save the risk of retaliation. The

Chinese had no conscience to be shocked by the persecution of foreigners, for in relation to them justice and injustice were meaningless terms. Such arrogance was not so much the result of any formulated belief as of a traditional feeling lying at the bottom of their moral conceptions; and just as the Chinese people to-day speak of foreigners, without consciousness of offence, as "devils," so did the best educated officials in the days before the war sincerely regard strangers as an inferior, if not a degraded, race. As late as 1870 a British representative writing to the Chinese Prime Minister complained that "the educated class, both by speech and writing, lets the people see that it regards the foreigner as a barbarian, a devil, or a brute." And there has been no change since except what is enforced by prudence. To the absence of law in their intercourse was therefore superadded a special negation of human rights, naturally accompanied by an overbearing demeanour on the side of the natives. The strangers were in effect outlawed. The attempts made from time to time to assert their independence resembled the spasmodic kicking of the ox against the goad which led rather to aggravation than amelioration of the pain. The prevailing tone was that of submission, inviting more and more aggression, until the cup overflowed and war ensued.

If we ask how it could happen that Britons of any class came to submit to such ignominy, the only answer forthcoming is that they did it for the sake of gain. And if, further, we try to press home the responsibility to any particular quarter, there is very little doubt that the principal blame must be laid at the door of the

East India Company, which ruled and monopolised the English trade with China until the expiration of their charter in 1834. The Board of Directors in Leadenhall Street demanded remittances, and cared nothing for the indignities which their distant agents might be forced to undergo in order to supply these demands. "The interests at stake were too valuable to be put at issue upon considerations of a personal nature, . . . and the Court leave the vindication of the national honour to the Crown." Such was their unchanging attitude. The agents on their side, balancing the pros and cons, concluded that at any cost they must retain the favour of the omnipotent Board. By this course of procedure the prestige which would have protected British subjects from outrage was bartered away; the Chinese were induced by the subservience of the Company's officers to practise constantly increasing insolence, and small blame to them. The demeanour of the Company's representatives was that of men carrying out instructions against their better judgment. Occasionally, indeed, their judgment got the better of their instructions, and they would attempt to make a stand for their rights. A case occurred in 1831 when new restrictions on the export of silver were imposed by the Chinese authorities. Mr H. H. Lindsay, head of the Company's committee, resented the proceeding, and threatened to stop the trade. In the event, however, the committee gave way, and in token of surrender delivered the keys of their factory to a Chinese mandarin.

The process which had been consecrated by time naturally did not stop when the principal cause of it was removed. It continued uninterrupted after the

monopoly of the Company had ceased. Indeed the case became much aggravated when the British agents, beginning with Lord Napier, became representatives of the Crown instead of the Company. And so little was the position understood by the authorities in Great Britain that, yielding to considerations of convenience, they appointed some of the very men whom the Chinese had been long accustomed to treat with contumely to be the representatives of the King. But the Chinese had a true presentiment of the nature of the changes which this new departure threatened. They had learned from Captain Weddell, Commodore Anson, and others what were the pretensions of the commander of a King's ship; and then justly inferred that a King's representative would stand on a wholly different footing from a Company's superintendent. They resolved, therefore, to nip in the bud every effort to open international relations, employing to that end all the weapons which were familiar to them. The viceroy of Canton not only declined communication with the British envoy, but imprisoned him and intercepted his letters, so that a naval force was required to release him from captivity. Yet it was not malevolence but policy that guided the hand of the Chinese authorities—the settled policy of keeping foreigners at arm's-length at all costs.

The rule of conduct enjoined by the British Government on the first representatives of the Crown in China was emphatically conciliation, as in the time of the East India Company and its superintendents. They were to "cautiously abstain from all unnecessary use of menacing language, or from making any appeal for protection to our military or naval force (except in extreme cases), or to do anything to irritate the feelings or revolt the

opinions or prejudices of the Chinese people." That article of the "Sign-manual Instructions to the Superintendents of Trade in China" was faithfully carried out; while the one ordering the envoy to "take up your residence at the port of Canton" could not be obeyed because the Chinese provincial authorities placed their veto on it. The conciliatory demeanour of the British representative was met by the refusal, accompanied by the grossest insults, of the Chinese to receive or acknowledge him. And not by insults only, such as perverting the phonetic rendering of his name by the substitution of characters bearing odious meanings, and by various indignities offered to his person, but by interference with his domestic servants, and even cutting off his food-supply, did they coerce him into abandoning his post at Canton. Their conduct evoked the opinion from Lord Napier, in reporting the incidents to his Government, that "the viceroy of Canton was guilty of an outrage on the British Crown calling for redress," which drew from the Duke of Wellington (February 2, 1835) the chilling comment that "it is not by force and violence that his Majesty intends to establish a commercial intercourse between his subjects and China, but by the other conciliatory measures so strongly inculcated in all the instructions which you have received." Lord Napier's despatches prove that he understood the situation perfectly. "What advantage or what point did we ever gain," he wrote, "by negotiating or humbling ourselves before these people, or rather before their Government? The records show nothing but subsequent humiliation and disgrace. What advantage or what point, again, have we ever lost that was just and reasonable, by acting with promptitude and vigour?

The records again assure us that such measures have been attended with complete success." And he recommended his Government "to consult immediately on the best plan to be adopted for commanding a commercial treaty, or a treaty which shall secure the just rights and embrace the interests, public and private, of all Europeans, — not of British alone, but of all civilised people coming to trade according to the principles of international law."

Driven to death by Chinese official barbarities, and by the discouragement of his own Government, Lord Napier was succeeded first by one then by another of the East India Company's old staff, who could only maintain themselves by sinking their character as British national envoys and submitting to the indignities which the Chinese more than ever delighted in imposing on them, increasing in virulence in proportion as the resistance to them grew weaker.

The line of policy inculcated upon Lord Napier was, in fact, scrupulously followed after his death, notably by Captain Charles Elliot, the third in succession, who received the King's commission in 1836. That officer indeed went far beyond his instructions in his efforts to conciliate the Chinese; for though repeatedly ordered by Lord Palmerston to communicate with the authorities direct, and not through the Hong merchants;[1] and not to head his communications with the word "petition"; and notwithstanding his own reiterated opinion in the same sense, Captain Elliot entirely yielded to the Chinese

[1] These were a syndicate appointed by the Chinese Government to conduct the foreign trade and be responsible to the Government for the proceedings of the foreign merchants.

pretensions. He communicated through the Hong merchants, and explicitly received the "commands" of the authorities with "reverence." As was natural, the more he conceded the more was exacted from him, until conciliation reached the point of exhaustion and there was nothing left to give up. Matters had nearly reached this stage when the British envoy could thus address the Governor of Canton (through the Hong merchants) in 1837: "The undersigned respectfully assures his Excellency that it is at once his duty and his anxious desire to conform in all things to the imperial pleasure." The result of this extreme humility was that Captain Elliot was forced to strike his flag at Canton and withdraw to the Portuguese settlement of Macao, on the ground that he was unable to maintain intercourse with the authorities on the conditions prescribed for him by her Majesty's Government.

CHAPTER III.

ANTECEDENTS OF THE WAR.

I. THE OPIUM TRADE.

Its increase caused alarm to Chinese Government by throwing the balance of trade against China—English manufacturers deplored the same fact—Drain of silver—Government opposition to the importation of opium—Official participation in the trade—The reign of sham—Illustrated by Mr Hunter—Captain Elliot volunteers to prevent smuggling—Rebuffed by Canton authorities—The principal patrons of the opium trade—Imperial Government and the opium traffic—Proposals to legalise it—The Empress—Commissioner Lin appointed to suppress trade—His uncompromising proceedings at Canton—Imprisonment of the foreign merchants, and of the British envoy—Surrender of opium by Captain Elliot.

COMMERCE itself had also for some time been a source of disquietude, and it is an interesting circumstance that it was the same feature of it which caused anxiety to both sides. The balance of trade was against China, which in the year 1838 had to provide bullion to the amount of upwards of £2,000,000 sterling to pay for the excess of imports over exports. English manufacturers deplored the fact that the purchasing power of China was restricted by the paucity of her commodities suitable for foreign markets, while the Chinese authorities saw with genuine alarm a yearly drain of what they deemed

the life-blood of their national wealth; for not only was silver and gold bullion exported in what to them were large amounts, but the vessels which brought raw cotton and opium from India were frequently ballasted for the return voyage with the copper coinage of the country. Crude, arbitrary, and quite ineffectual devices were resorted to by the Chinese for the arrest or mitigation of the leakage of the precious metal. Opium, being the commodity which the people most imperatively demanded, was always paid for in hard cash, while ordinary merchandise might be bartered against Chinese produce. It is not therefore difficult to understand how, without prejudice to moral or political considerations, the article opium should have become so conspicuous a factor in the agony which preceded the war.

In characterising the relations then subsisting between the Chinese and foreigners as lawless, it is not meant that China is a country governed without law, although it is true that even in the purely domestic administration of the State legality is systematically travestied. But in connection with foreign relations, and almost as a necessity of the case, every trace of legality was obliterated in practice, and the merchants were constantly entangled in a labyrinth of illusions and pitfalls. No regulation was, or was ever intended to be, carried out as promulgated; it was generally something quite different that was aimed at, and it is literally true that the law was more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Many Chinese eagles swooped on the carcass of foreign trade; various authorities competed for the spoil; and the constantly changing orders were often

merely stratagems by which one set of officials sought to steal an advantage over another. The rules of the game were perfectly understood, and the loftiest professions of public duty were the invariable concomitant of the most corrupt practice.

The two principal trade authorities in Canton were the viceroy of the two provinces, and the *hoppo*, who held an independent commission from Peking as superintendent of the customs. Smuggling was of course systematic. Though there were severe dormant laws against it whereby unwary individuals might on occasion be entrapped, yet the practice was openly carried on in every department of traffic, its chief patrons being the viceroy and the *hoppo*. The importation of opium was officially prohibited, but no branch of trade was so effectually protected. The depot ships lay in what was regarded as the outer waters of China—that is, the archipelago in the estuary of the Canton river. But the drug was brought to land in the viceroy's own boats and to his profit. The traffic was conducted under a fluctuating arrangement between the native merchants and the authorities, the latter taking frequent occasion to pick quarrels with the former in order to have a pretext for extortion. The fees levied upon the opium-dealers were divided among the officials, but they could never trust each other to deal fairly in the distribution of the takings. By way of check on sharp practice a Chinese war-vessel was in the habit of visiting the receiving ships, taking from them an account of their deliveries, and at the same time making a small levy for the commander's personal behoof, for which a formal receipt was granted.

A new *hoppo* came to Canton in 1837, and, as had

been the custom with his predecessors, he inaugurated his commission by issuing drastic edicts, in concert with the viceroy, against the sale of opium, even going through the form of arresting some of the dealers. This demonstration, like all that had gone before, was merely intended to cover a heavier exaction than had yet been levied. The dealers and boatmen refused the terms, and by way of protest the latter burned their boats. Whereupon the two high officers built boats of their own, which, with the Government ones already employed in the business, brought the whole of the opium to Canton. In this manner was the trade resumed after a temporary stoppage caused by the strike of the dealers and boat-owners against the extortions of the viceroy and *hoppo*. Nor was there ever any secret in Peking respecting these proceedings. Indeed the occasion of any high official travelling to the capital was always marked by a great enhancement of the market price of opium, of which the official or his retinue invariably carried a large quantity for sale there. This circumstance was published in the trade circulars printed in Canton, without the least concealment of the name of the mandarin under whose protection the drug was transported. The *hoppo* was, and still is, an imperial *protégé*, and it was, and is still, perfectly understood that he divides the proceeds of his Canton harvest with his patrons. It is for that purpose that he receives the appointment. And this was a trade proscribed under extreme penalties by imperial edict! It is needless to trace the network of elusion in which the administrative ingenuity of Chinese officialdom was exercised, and the specimen given above may be taken as typical of the

system. "Nevertheless, during the year 1838 very serious and determined measures began to be adopted by the Chinese authorities, directed generally against the trade in opium; and imperial edicts threatened death as the punishment for both the dealers in and smokers of the drug."

It is hardly possible outside of China to realise the systematic make-believe under which public affairs are carried on.

Life and business in Canton, says Mr Hunter,[1] was a conundrum as insoluble as the Sphinx; everything worked smoothly by acting in direct opposition to what we were told to do. Certainly we were told to "listen and obey," to "tremble and not by obstinacy and irregularity to court the wrath of the imperial will"! We were reminded from time to time that we were "sojourning in the land on sufferance." We were threatened and re-threatened with the "direst penalties if we sold *foreign mud* to the people; truly forbearance could no longer be exercised." Yet we continued to sell the drug as usual. Our receiving ships at Lintin must no longer loiter at that anchorage, but "forthwith either come into port or return to their respective countries." The heart of the ruler of all within the *Four Seas* was indeed full of compassion and had been indulgent to the barbarians. But now no more delay could be granted, "cruisers would be sent to open their irresistible broadsides" upon the foreign ships. Yet in spite of these terrors the ships never budged. We were "forbidden to wander about except three times a-month, and that not without a linguist," but we walked whenever we pleased, and the linguist is the last person we ever saw.

And so on through a long catalogue of prohibitions to the disregard of which the officials themselves were always parties.

We get an exact description also of the mode in which the opium trade was carried on from the pen

[1] Bits of Old China. Kegan Paul.

of Mr Hunter, himself an actor as well as an eye-witness. It furnishes a perfect illustration of the reign of sham which prevails generally in China :—

We anchored on the inside of the island of Namoa close by two English brigs, the Omega and Governor Findlay. Inshore of us were riding at anchor two men-of-war junks, with much bunting displayed; one bore the flag of a *foo-tseang* or commodore. Knowing the "formalities" to be gone through with the mandarins, we expected a visit from one, and until it was made no Chinese boat would come alongside, nor would a junk, not even a bumboat. We had no sooner furled sails and made everything shipshape, when his "Excellency" approached in his gig—a sort of scow as broad as she was long. . . . He was received at the gangway by Captain Forster. His manner and bearing were easy and dignified. When cheroots and a glass of wine had been offered, the "commodore" inquired the cause of our anchoring at Namoa. The *shroff* gave him to understand that the vessel, being on her way from Singapore to Canton, had been compelled, through contrary winds and currents, to run for Namoa to replenish her wood and water. Having listened attentively, the great man said that "any supplies might be obtained, but when they were on board, not a moment must be lost in sailing for Whampoa, as the Great Emperor did not permit vessels from afar to visit any other port." He then gravely pulled from his boot a long red document and handed it to his secretary, that we might be informed of its purport. It was as follows :—

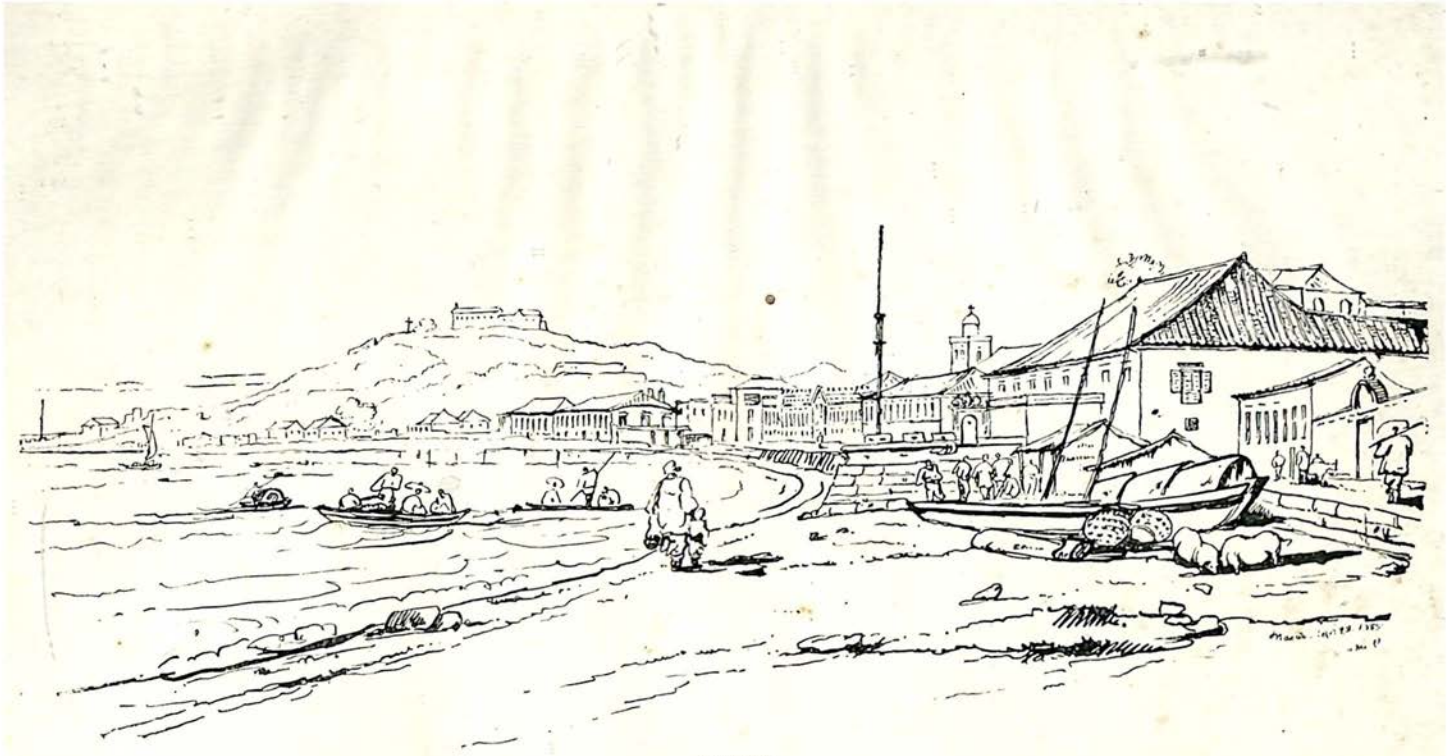
An Imperial Edict.

As the port of Canton is the only one at which outside barbarians are allowed to trade, on no account can they be permitted to wander about to other places in the "Middle Kingdom." The "Son of Heaven," however, whose compassion is as boundless as the ocean, cannot deny to those who are in distress from want of food, through adverse seas and currents, the necessary means of continuing their voyage. When supplied they must no longer loiter, but depart at once. Respect this.

Tao-kuang, 17*th year*, 6*th moon*, 4*th sun*.

This "imperial edict" having been replaced in its envelope and slipped inside of his boot (for service on the chance of another foreign vessel "in distress"), his Excellency arose from his seat, which was a signal for all his attendants to return to the boat, except his secretary. The two were then invited to the cabin to refresh, which being done, we proceeded to business. The mandarin opened by the direct questions, "How many chests have you on board? Are they all for Namoa? Do you go farther up the coast?" Intimating at the same time that *there* the officers were uncommonly strict, and were obliged to carry out the will of the "Emperor of the Universe," &c. But our answers were equally as clear and prompt, that the vessel was not going north of Namoa, that her cargo consisted of about 200 chests. Then came the question of *cumsha*, and that was settled on the good old Chinese principle of "all same custom." Everything being thus comfortably arranged, wine drunk, and cheroots smoked, his Excellency said "Kaoutsze" (I announce my departure). . . . Chinese buyers came on board freely the moment they saw the "official" visit had been made. A day or two after, several merchant junks stood out from the mainland for the anchorage. As they approached we distinguished a private signal at their mastheads, a copy of which had been furnished to us before leaving Capshuymun. We hoisted ours, the junks anchored close to us, and in a surprisingly short time received from the Rose in their own boats the opium, which had been sold at Canton, and there paid for, deliverable at this anchorage. It was a good illustration of the entire confidence existing between the foreign seller in his factory at Canton and the Chinese buyers, and of a transaction for a breach of any of the conditions of which there existed no legal redress on one side or the other.

From his asylum in Macao Captain Elliot thought he saw an opportunity for making a fresh attempt to ingratiate himself with the Chinese authorities. Disregarding the fact that the only return for his previous efforts at conciliation had been accumulated insult and odious accusations against himself personally, Captain Elliot resolved on trying once more.



MACAO.

So, when the opium agitation broke out in 1838-39, he volunteered his assistance in suppressing smuggling in the river. The viceroy, being the head and front of the abuse, spurned the offer, saying, what was perfectly true, that he could stop the traffic himself by a stroke of the pen.

Ignoring the rebuff, Captain Elliot did nevertheless issue an order that "all British-owned schooners, or other vessels habitually or occasionally engaged in the illicit opium traffic, *within* the Bocca Tigris, should remove before the expiration of three days, and not again return within the Bocca Tigris, being so engaged." And they were at the same time distinctly warned, that if "any British subjects were feloniously to cause the death of a Chinaman in consequence of persisting in the trade within the Bocca Tigris, he would be liable to capital punishment; that no owners of such vessels so engaged would receive any assistance or interposition from the British Government in case the Chinese Government should seize any of them; and that all British subjects employed in these vessels would be held responsible for any consequences which might arise from forcible resistance offered to the Chinese Government, in the same manner as if such resistance were offered to their own or any other Government, in their own or in any foreign country." This gratuitous assumption of the functions of the Chinese executive plunged Captain Elliot into still greater difficulties, and prepared the way for the tragic events which were to follow a year later. In vulgar parlance he "gave himself away" to the Chinese, for in professing to be able to stop opium traffic within the river he tacitly

accepted the responsibility of stopping it also in the estuary, where the British depot ships lay at anchor. It was, in fact, the driving home of this responsibility by the Chinese which was the apparent occasion of the war. For it is certain that during his three years of office as representative of the Crown of England Captain Elliot had given no provocation to the Chinese, nor had he in any way withstood their aggression.

But a sudden change now came over the scene. The opium question had been for some time debated in the imperial counsels with considerable earnestness, the issue turning on the alternatives of suppressing or legalising the traffic. It seems likely that in those deliberations the reigning emperor, Tao-kuang, played a very secondary part; indeed as an active factor in the government of the country he appears to have been of little more account than his successors have been. He is described as an amiable but weak man, sensible of the difficulties of his country, but misinformed with regard to them by the favourites around him. The most interesting personality about the Imperial Court at that time appears to have been the empress, who had raised herself to that exalted position by her talents as well as by her fascinations. Though her career was a very short one, she exercised a potent influence on affairs throughout the whole empire. She was credited with a rare power of judging men and of selecting them for offices of trust. She was a reformer of abuses and a true patriot; but what was most remarkable, considering the order of ideas which surrounded her, she held liberal views as to the ex-

tension of foreign intercourse, and was at the head of the party which was in favour of legalising the opium traffic. A memorial addressed to her urging this measure was submitted by the emperor to the governor of Canton, Tang, who with his colleagues reported on it favourably. The success of the empress's policy enraged her enemies and stirred them to the most strenuous efforts to compass her fall. The emperor, it is said, remained neutral in this strife. The opposition party prevailed, gaining over the emperor to their side while he was smarting from the grief caused by the death of his own son from opium, an event which enlisted his personal feelings against the drug.

So far, however, had the question been carried, that the legalisation of the opium trade was fully anticipated by Captain Elliot up to the very hour that the storm burst.

The final decision of the Government was to put an end to the trade, for which purpose they sent an imperial commissioner to Canton, armed with full authority to carry out the emperor's edicts. He arrived at his post, March 10, 1839. Commissioner Lin, the best known character, with the exception of Captain Elliot himself, in connection with the war, was a man of uncommon energy and resolution, and was therefore in some respects well chosen for the extraordinary task which was imposed upon him. He was a native of Fukien province, an official of high standing, having been Governor-General of the Central Provinces, the Hu Kwang. He was now appointed Governor-General of the Two Kwang and Imperial Commissioner for dealing with the opium

question. As a Chinese administrator he had been popular, and was no doubt possessed of many high qualities.[1] It is possible that had he taken time to study the foreign question with which he had to deal, and had he not been betrayed by his too easy initial successes, he might have been the means of placing the foreign relations of his country on a footing of mutual accommodation. A reasonable man would have perceived the utter impossibility of preventing the Chinese people from purchasing a commodity for which they had an overmastering desire. He showed great ignorance of human nature in proposing to break his countrymen of opium-smoking within a year, after which time offenders were to be beheaded.[2] This was but a sample of his violence and of his incapacity to see two sides of a question. It must be remembered, however, that he had undertaken to carry out the emperor's instructions, and it is difficult to pronounce what amount of latitude he might have allowed himself in the interpretation of them.

His proceedings were of an uncompromising character most unusual with Chinese. Possessing full authority, he exercised it to the utmost, terrorising all the local officials into absolute subservience. The governor of Canton, himself deeply implicated in the opium

[1] When he visited Macao later in the year 1839—after the events—there were public demonstrations in his honour, whether prompted by public respect for his despotic power or approval of the use he had just made of it, or merely a recognition of his previously established reputation, may very well remain an open question.

[2] Possibly, however, this was but a specimen of the hyperbolic diction which is habitual with the Chinese. An official will threaten his servant with instant decapitation for a trifling offence, meaning nothing whatever thereby.

traffic, a fact well known to the Imperial Commissioner, was constrained to save himself by affecting the utmost zeal in executing the commissioner's behests. Having thus disposed of all the opposition with which Chinese high officials have usually to reckon from their subordinates, Lin gave the rein to his headstrong temper, and instead of effecting reform, plunged his country into a war which shattered the imperial prestige.

Within three weeks of Lin's arrival in Canton the drastic measures against foreigners, and particularly against the opium trade, culminated in his imprisoning the whole of the merchants within their factories at Canton, menacing them with further outrages on their person. At this crisis Captain Elliot, having left his residence at Macao, made his way under difficulties to Canton, that he might share the captivity of his countrymen and act as their head and mouthpiece. Having thus got the superintendent of trade into his power, Commissioner Lin preferred most extravagant demands upon him, including the delivery to the Chinese of all opium owned by British merchants, which amounted to 20,000 chests valued at upwards of £2,000,000. The imprisoned merchants had no choice but to yield to the demand made upon them by the representative of the British Crown; and as the recent agitations had interfered greatly with the course of trade, their assent to the terms was no doubt soothed by the reflection that they were making a clearance sale of their goods to a solvent purchaser, her Majesty's Government. They issued their delivery orders for the opium on the 27th March 1839. It is to the credit of Commissioner Lin that in a memorial

to the throne he commended the loyalty of certain of the British merchants.[1]

This grand concession to the demand of Commissioner Lin was but the climax of all the antecedent steps of British submission. There was no haggling, but a prompt and unconditional surrender in the following terms:—

Elliot to the Imperial Commissioner.

CANTON, *March* 27, 1839.

Elliot, &c., &c., has now the honour to receive for the first time your Excellency's commands, bearing date the 26th day of March, issued by the pleasure of the Great Emperor, to deliver over into the hands of honourable officers to be appointed by your Excellency all the opium in the hands of British subjects.

Elliot must faithfully and completely fulfil these commands, and he has now respectfully to request that your Excellency will be pleased to indicate the point to which the ships of his nation, having opium on board, are to proceed, so that the whole may be delivered up.

The faithful account of the same shall be transmitted as soon as it is ascertained.

Captain Elliot did not even give himself time to verify the figures, and in his haste committed himself to the delivery of more opium than was actually in being. The consequence was that he could not deliver until fresh importations arrived, when he was obliged to enter the market as an opium merchant and purchase sufficient to enable him to fulfil his engagement.

[1] As in its commutation for the surrender of slave property, so now the British Government inflicted serious injustice on the owners of the opium. Captain Elliot's drafts on the Treasury were dishonoured, he having had no authority to draw, and the merchants had to wait four years for a most inadequate payment.

II. THE SEQUEL TO THE SURRENDER OF OPIUM.

Captain Elliot complains of his lengthened imprisonment—The continued cruelties of Commissioner Lin—Subservience of the Portuguese—English merchants driven from their homes in Macao to seek refuge on shipboard—Pursued by the vengeance of the Commissioner—Chinese claim absolute jurisdiction over person and property—Demand for an English seaman for execution.

The interesting question in all this is how the Chinese authorities were impressed with the magnanimous sacrifice of over £2,000,000 sterling worth of private property as a ransom for the liberties of British subjects. They were certainly not impressed favourably, for Captain Elliot, together with the whole community, was detained for many weeks after the delivery of the opium close prisoners in Canton, and cut off from all outside communication. A week after the surrender Captain Elliot wrote to Lord Palmerston, "The blockade is increasing in closeness. . . . This is the first time in our intercourse with this empire that its Government has taken the unprovoked initiative in aggressive measures against British life, property, and liberty, and against the dignity of the British Crown." On the same day the Imperial Commissioner threatened to cut off the water-supply from the beleaguered merchants. A week later Captain Elliot wrote, "The blockade is not relaxed, . . . the reverse is the case;" and he was constrained, though with evident reluctance, to characterise "the late measures as public robbery and wanton violence." Commissioner Lin's "continuance of the state of restraint, insult, and dark intimidation, subsequently to the surrender, has classed the case amongst the most shameless violences which one nation

has yet dared to perpetrate against another." And there is a forlorn pathos in his confession, a fortnight later, of the futility of "remonstrances from a man in my present situation to a high Chinese officer determined to be false and perfidious."

Nor did the Chinese appetite for cruelty cease to grow by what it fed upon even after the crisis of the Canton imprisonment was over. The British community, when forced to seek safety on board of their ships, were pursued from anchorage to anchorage by the implacable vengeance of the Imperial Commissioner. The natives were by proclamation ordered to "intercept and wholly cut off all supplies" from the English, some of whom "had gone to reside on board the foreign ships at Hongkong, and it was to be apprehended that in their extremity some may land at the outer villages and hamlets along the coast to purchase provisions," in which case the "people were to drive them back, fire upon or make prisoners of them." "Even when they land to take water from the springs, stop their progress and let them not have it in their power to drink." Another proclamation stated that "poison had been put into this water; let none of our people take it to drink." During the summer of 1839 many murderous outrages were perpetrated by the Commissioner's orders on English small craft wherever they were found isolated or defenceless.

It is not necessary to pursue these barbarities in detail. Sufficient has been advanced to illustrate the spirit in which the Chinese Government, in a time of peace and without a vestige of provocation, drove the retreating and absolutely submissive English to desperation. And their characteristic manner of recom-

pensing servility was illustrated with cynical humour in a long memorandum drawn up during the progress of the war by Commissioner Lin, the author of the savage proceedings just referred to. "Since," he says, "the English are so eager for the recommencement of their traffic, let us couple the grant with another stipulation, that they present us with the head of Elliot, the leader in every mischief, the disturber of the peace, and the source of all this trouble"—the last statement containing more truth than probably the writer himself fully realised.

Under such conditions it was obviously impossible to place the persons and property of British subjects at the mercy of Chinese officials. Yet this is what the authorities at Canton insisted upon,—"full submission to Chinese penal legislation, involving capital punishment by Chinese forms of trial." This was no new claim. The Chinese were simply following the precedents. English, French, and Americans had each in turn given up their men to be strangled on the demand of the Chinese authorities, and though the right had not been exercised for nearly twenty years, Lin evidently thought the occasion favourable for reviving it. He furnished a clear explanation of what a Chinese trial would be by demanding of the British representative the unconditional surrender for execution of the alleged murderer of a Chinese. To Captain Elliot's almost penitential protestations, that he had been unable to discover the assumed murderer among the numerous liberty men of ships of more than one nationality who had been in the scuffle, the Chinese authorities paid no regard whatever. The Queen's representative was publicly denounced

in scurrilous language by Commissioner Lin for concealing and failing to deliver up an offender, and for criminal violation of the laws of China as "shown by our reiterated proclamations and clear commands." This truculent proclamation being followed by an ultimatum giving ten days for the surrender of the unknown murderer under threat of the extermination of the British community, the latter had to escape in a body from Canton to seek refuge in Macao, whence they were expelled by the authorities of that settlement at the behest of the Chinese commissioner. This act of loyalty on the part of the Portuguese was duly acknowledged by the Imperial Commissioner's reply, through his subordinate officials, in the following terms:—

We have received from his Excellency the Imperial Commissioner a reply to our representation that the English foreigners had, one and all, left Macao, and that the Portuguese Governor and Procurador had ably and strenuously aided in their expulsion, and faithfully repressed disorder. The reply is to this effect:—

That the Portuguese Governor and Procurador having thus ably obeyed the commands for their expulsion, evinces the respectful sense of duty of those officers, and merits commendation. I, the High Commissioner, in company with the Governor, will personally repair to Macao to soothe and encourage. And you are required to pay instant obedience hereto, by making this intention known to them.

Captain Elliot, in a despatch to the Portuguese governor, characterised his act as a participation "in measures of unprecedented inhospitality and enmity against British subjects."[1]

[1] "By the treaty of 1703," wrote Sir Anders Ljunstedt, the last chief of the Swedish Company's factory, "Portugal placed herself, as it were, under the protection of Great Britain. This Power never failed to render her ally the assistance she stood in need of either in Europe or her ultramarine dominions." The English had defended Macao against the French in 1803.

Into the merits of the opium question itself, or of that unique transaction, the surrender of £2,000,000 sterling worth of the commodity by a British agent on the mere demand of a Chinese official, it would be impossible to enter within the limits of space assigned to us. But it is obvious that such a demand, made within two years of the time when the viceroy of Canton was building a flotilla to carry the merchants' drug from the receiving ships to his provincial capital, was something so extravagant that compliance with it must be followed either by open war or by complete submission and the abandonment of China as a trading field. It is of course conceivable that had the ordinary Chinese canon been applied to the case, and the proclamations of Commissioner Lin been interpreted, like those that had gone before, as the inaugural bombast of a newcomer, the demands might have been evaded with impunity. The Portuguese, in fact, did evade them by the simple expedient of sending their opium to sea for a time and bringing it back again. There is some ground for the surmise that the High Commissioner himself reckoned on evasion, and was even embarrassed by his unexpected success in having such an enormous amount of property frankly thrown on his hands. Our collision with China may thus be said to have been brought about by a breach in the continuity of precedents on both sides,—we reckoning up to a certain point on the continuance of sham, and the Chinese on the continuance of submission. Both were misled, and there was no way of reconciliation but by the arbitrament of force.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST CHINA WAR, 1839–1842.

Captain Elliot despatches his only ship to India with a report of the situation—The helplessness of the British community and persecutions by the Chinese during three months—Arrival of two ships—The Chinese attack them and are defeated—Expedition from India and England arrives—Canton river blockaded—Attempts to appeal to Central Government rebuffed—Squadron sent to the Peiho—Kishen appointed to treat—Expedition returns south—Negotiations opened near Canton—Bogue forts destroyed by British ships—Illusory negotiations—River blockaded, but commerce partially resumed—Extensive war preparations by Chinese—Captain Elliot's confidence in the Chinese—Hostilities carried on—Canton commanded and ransomed—Triumph of the populace—Operations extended to northern coasts—Agreement between Captain Elliot and Kishen repudiated by both sovereigns—Arrival of Vice-Admiral Sir William Parker—War vigorously prosecuted—Towns and forts taken—Nanking threatened—Commissioners Ilipu and Kiying appointed to treat—Treaty concluded at Nanking, August 29, 1842—The character of Ilipu.

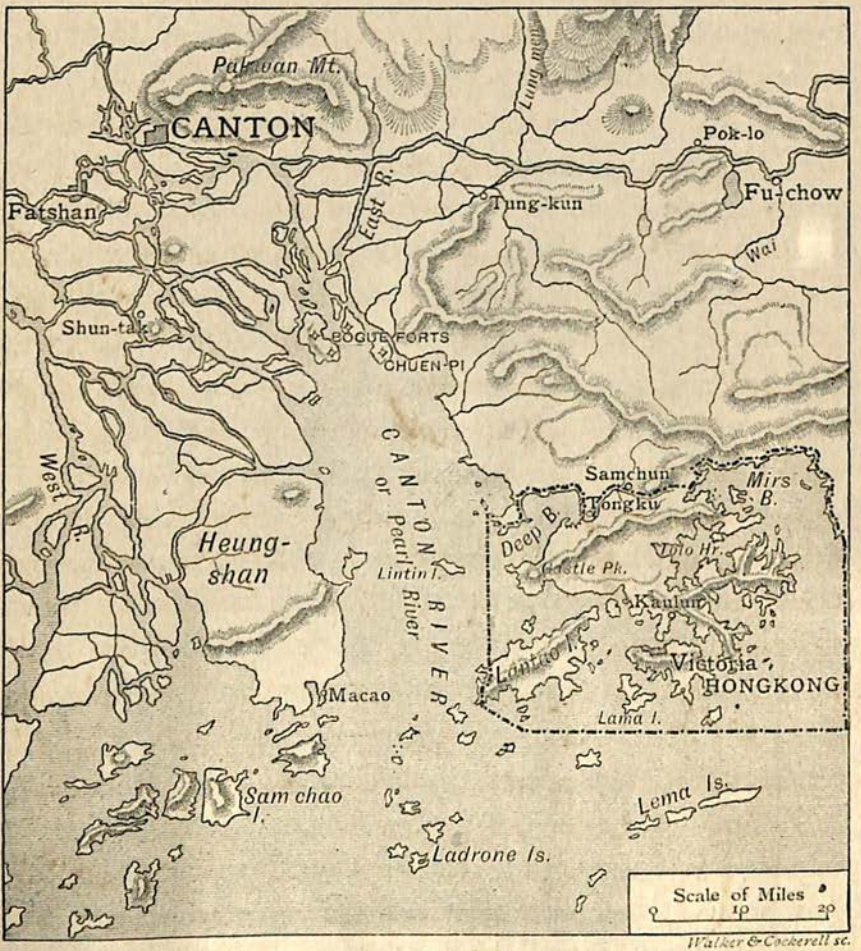
CAPTAIN ELLIOT, after the severities to which he and his countrymen had been subjected, despatched a vessel to Calcutta with a report on the situation to the Governor-General of India, making a corresponding report at the same time to London. The departure of this, the only vessel at the disposal of the British agent, left him and the mercantile community in a helpless predicament during three critical months, and it was natural that the Chinese should take advantage of so favourable an opportunity to fill the cup of their cruelties fuller than

ever. The only form of reprisal which was left to the unfortunate Captain Elliot was his intimation to the merchants that he had moved both the British and Indian Governments to forbid the admission of tea and other Chinese produce into their territories—an announcement which is said to have irritated Commissioner Lin excessively. On September 11, 1839, however, her Majesty's ship Volage appeared on the scene. Her commander, Captain Smith, considered that the least he could do in defence of his countrymen was to blockade the Canton river by way of retaliation for "the stoppage of the supplies of food by order of the Chinese Government, and for the Chinese people having been ordered to fire upon and seize her Majesty's subjects wherever they went; and that certain of them had been actually cut off."

This slight evidence of vitality on the part of the English produced an immediate effect on the Chinese: their violent proclamations against Elliot were withdrawn; provisions were no longer prohibited; and certain negotiations were inaugurated for the resumption of trade *outside* the Barrier; whereupon Captain Smith promptly raised the blockade.

Before long, however, the Chinese resumed their offensive attitude, endeavoured to compel British trading ships to enter within the Bogue, and renewed their demands for the murderer of a Chinaman, failing which the foreign ships were ordered to depart within three days on pain of immediate destruction. They accordingly withdrew to the anchorage of Tongku, which became the rendezvous of all the ships of war. Difficulties continued to increase on both sides, without prospect of any solution, until the 29th of October,

when another British man-of-war, the Hyacinth, arrived and joined the Volage. These vessels proceeded to Chuenpee, with Captain Elliot on board, for the purpose of eliciting from the Commissioner some explicit



MAP OF CANTON WATERS.

declaration of his intentions. They were at once attacked by the Chinese admiral with a fleet of twenty-nine war-junks, which they beat off; and thus occurred the first hostile encounter between the armed forces of the two nations.

Of the operations which followed, extending over nearly three years, full accounts were given at the time, none better than the 'Narrative of the Voyages and Services of the Nemesis from 1840-43,' by W. D. Bernard, with which may be profitably compared Dr Eitel's concise history,[1] published forty years later, with all the documents before him.

The British Government came to the conclusion that the limits of forbearance had been overstepped. The action of the Chinese authorities during 1839 forced on it the choice of two alternatives, to abandon British subjects and their interests or to exact reasonable treatment for them from the Chinese. The latter was selected, and it was resolved to demand a commercial treaty under which foreign trade might be carried on with security to person and property. In support of this decision military and naval forces, equipped in England and in India, assembled on the coast of China during the spring of 1840. Among the novelties of this equipment were a number of small light-draught iron steamers, the most famous of which was the Nemesis, built for the Honourable Company by Mr Laird of Birkenhead, drawing only six feet laden. This exceedingly mobile little craft, under her energetic commander, W. H. Hall, performed almost incredible services as the maid-of-all-work of the expedition. The blockade of the Canton river, which had been established and withdrawn several times, was finally declared on the 28th of June 1840, as a first step in the regular war programme, by Commodore Sir Gordon Bremer. A few days later the command of the fleet was assumed by Rear-Admiral the Hon. George Elliot,

[1] Europe in Asia. Luzac & Co.

who was also appointed joint-plenipotentiary with Captain Charles Elliot.

Before commencing a general war upon the Emperor of China every resource was exhausted for opening communications with the Imperial Government through other channels than that of Canton. The frigate Blonde was despatched for this purpose to the harbour of Amoy, where the local officials not only refused to receive a letter from the English admiral, but ordered an attack upon the boat conveying it on shore. The frigate retaliated for this insult by opening fire upon the Chinese batteries and war-junks, after which she returned to Hongkong to report proceedings to the admiral. About this time, early in July 1840, the island of Chusan was taken and occupied. The attempt to deliver a letter from Lord Palmerston addressed to the Cabinet at Peking, by way of Ningpo, having been frustrated by the authorities at that port, a blockade was established of Hangchow Bay and the mouth of the Yangtze. It had been Captain Elliot's favourite device, as it came to be that of all his successors, to apply pressure to the Court of Peking by means of a blockade of this the main artery of the Chinese empire, and it was by following up this scheme that the war thus commenced in 1840 was actually brought to a successful issue in 1842.

The attempts to gain access to the Court through the southern seaports having failed, the venue was shifted to the neighbourhood of the capital itself. A heavy squadron of ships accordingly anchored off the mouth of the Peiho—a demonstration which was sufficiently menacing to the capital to induce the Court to appoint an official to parley with Captain Elliot, and

also to receive the undelivered letter from Lord Palmerston. Kishen, a Manchu of high rank, was chosen for this service by the emperor. The first, perhaps the sole, object of Kishen's diplomacy was to relieve the apprehensions of the Court by procuring the prompt withdrawal of the foreign forces. This end was achieved in one short conference with Captain Elliot, when Tientsin was pronounced to be too near the emperor's palace for negotiations, and it was decided that the scene should be shifted back to Canton, a new commissioner being appointed to supersede Lin, the impracticable. The squadron thereupon, about the end of September, withdrew to Chusan. It was generally believed that an armistice had been arranged pending negotiations, but it was soon discovered that the only truce made applied exclusively to the island of Chusan, where it had been declared. The two English plenipotentiaries repaired to Macao in November.

All this while extensive preparations for hostilities were vigorously prosecuted in the neighbourhood of Canton. Attempts to communicate under flag of truce were repelled by force, and it was remarked that the Chinese were sufficiently well versed in the significance of the white flag to make free use of it for their own protection, while disregarding its employment by the other side. The Imperial Commissioner, Kishen, reached Canton at the end of November, his arrival coinciding in point of time with the invaliding of Admiral Elliot, the co-plenipotentiary, thus leaving the British negotiations once more in the sole hands of Captain Elliot until such time as Sir Gordon Bremer was appointed as his associate.

Of the two diplomatists who had now to confront

each other it would be difficult to say whether the English or Chinese was the more anxious to avert hostilities. To avoid precipitating a conflict negotiations were not pressed home by either party, nor were any steps taken to give effect to the conference which had been held between them at Tientsin.

The hostile demonstrations of the Chinese, and the extraordinary exertions they were putting forth to place themselves in a position to bar the entrance to the river, compelled the British naval commander-in-chief to assume the offensive by attacking the outer defences at its mouth. The forts and guns were destroyed as well as the Chinese fleet of war-junks, native Indian troops and Royal Marines forming an important part of the attacking force. There remained extensive fortifications within the embouchure, and every preparation was made on both sides for resuming the contest on the following morning; but just as the British guns were about to open fire a small sampan, with an old woman and a man on board, was sent off by the Chinese admiral proposing a cessation of hostilities. This unpromising overture did actually eventuate in an armistice, holding out the prospect of a treaty of peace, but with the details as usual carefully kept in the background. During the period of truce granted by Captain Elliot the Chinese continued as active as ever in strengthening and extending their defences. This necessitated continued precautions on the British side, for it is to be noted throughout all the proceedings that the naval and military commanders never shared the illusions of Captain Elliot as regards the conciliatory intentions of the Chinese. They formed their

opinions upon what they saw with their eyes, and not by what any Chinese official professed with his lips.

On January 20, thirteen days after the attack on Chuenpee forts, Captain Elliot announced from Macao that "preliminininary arrangements had been concluded. Hongkong was to be ceded, and an indemnity of $6,000,000 to be paid by the Chinese; direct official intercourse on terms of equality, and trade to be resumed, within ten days." This good effect, he added, was "due to the scrupulous good faith of every eminent person with whom negotiations are still pending." The British plenipotentiary did not lose an hour in carrying out his part of the incomplete compact, which was the substantial one of rendering back to the Chinese their captured forts. The ceremony of the rendition of the Chuenpee forts was performed on the 21st, when the British flag was formally struck and the Chinese hoisted in its place under a salute from the flagship. On the other side the occupation of Hongkong by the British forces proceeded just as if the arrangements between the plenipotentiaries had been definitive.

Serious conferences then ensued between the British and Chinese plenipotentiaries within the river, at a point known as the Second Bar. The blockade was nevertheless maintained, so that a French corvette which arrived to watch the course of events was unable to enter the river. Captain Elliot, however, invited her commander to accompany him and "assist" at his interview with Kishen. In the meanwhile the conciliatory attitude of the Chinese commissioner was severely denounced from the throne, and while these conferences were proceeding, messengers of war were

on their way from Peking charged with nothing less than the extermination of the barbarians. Kishen was degraded, and instead of peaceable negotiations, a proclamation was placarded on the walls of Canton offering $50,000 each for the heads of the British plenipotentiary and the commodore.

After the expiration of this one-sided truce open hostilities were re-entered upon. The Bogue forts had to be once more captured, and the British flag re-hoisted. That accomplished, the blockade of the river was raised. This somewhat remarkable step was no doubt due to the overmastering anxiety shown throughout by Captain Elliot for the immediate resumption of trade, he having learnt in the Company's school to place the current season's business above every other consideration. It appears certain that the quite disproportionate value attached by him to this one object obscured his perspective, if indeed it did not vitiate his whole policy. Trading vessels were permitted to proceed up-river, but under the peculiar reservation that the stakes, chains, and barriers placed by the Chinese to obstruct navigation should first be removed. The fleet, nevertheless, had still to fight its way up to Canton, Captain Elliot meanwhile never ceasing to make overtures of peace to the Chinese. There were truces and suspensions of hostilities, all of the same nature, binding only on one side, and such a medley of peace and war as seemed rather to belong to the middle ages than to the nineteenth century. Trade was pushed on all the more briskly for the general fear that the duration of peace was likely to be brief; and as both parties were alike interested in getting the season's produce shipped,

the Chinese authorities were not ill-pleased to see commerce thus carried on while they employed the interval in hurrying forward their grand preparations for the crushing of the invading force. Hostilities were suspended by an agreement on March 20, 1841, and Captain Elliot, after residing some time in the foreign factory, where he had opportunities of sounding the disposition of the new commissioners, declared himself perfectly satisfied with their "assurances of good faith," which he repeated in the same public manner a fortnight later—that is, a month after the suspension of hostilities. On leaving the Canton factory Captain Elliot, strong in the faith he professed, urged on the senior naval officer the propriety of moving his ships away from the city in order to show our peaceful disposition, the guard of marines which had been stationed for the protection of the factories to be at the same time withdrawn.

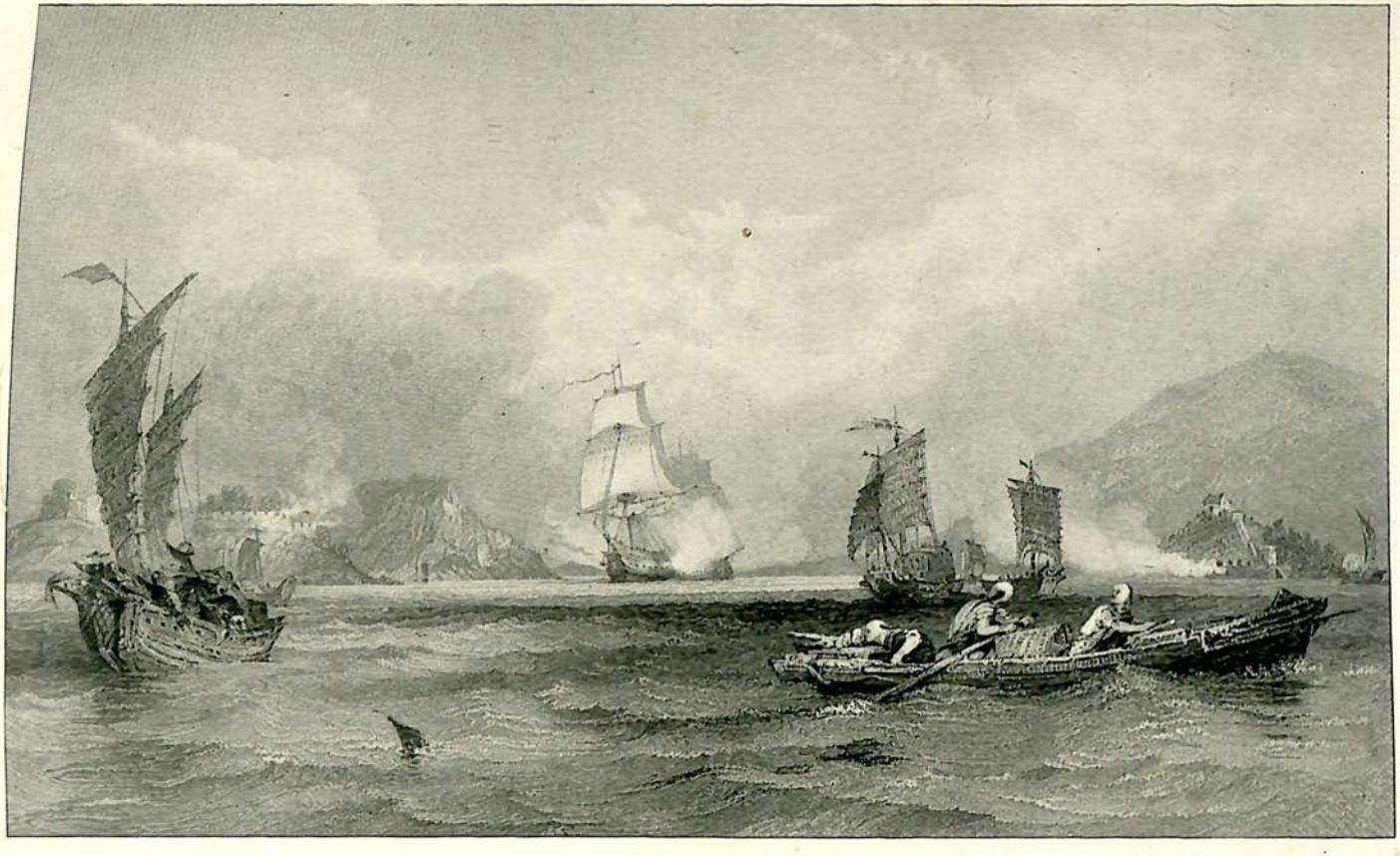
The mercantile community by no means participated in the confidence of the plenipotentiary, nor, as we have said, did the naval commanders. Indeed so little satisfied were they with the turn of affairs, that Sir Gordon Bremer left in a Company's steamer for Calcutta to lay the situation before the Governor-General of India.[1] This occurred in the middle of April. In the beginning of May troops were seen pouring into the forts near the city. An immense number of fire-rafts in preparation to burn the fleet

[1] Commodore Senhouse, who succeeded temporarily to the command, was so mortified by the course of diplomacy that his death at Hongkong in the month of June 1841 was believed to have been hastened thereby. His dying request was that his body should be taken to Macao, for burial, as he feared that further conciliatory measures might result in Hongkong being given back to the Chinese.

could not be concealed, while placards of a most menacing character were posted about the city walls. Captain Elliot, whether he was shaken in his belief in the pacific assurances of the Chinese authorities or not, returned to the scene, on board the Nemesis, on the 10th of May, and it is said that, in order to show the Chinese that he still believed in their good faith, he was accompanied on this one occasion by his wife, probably the first European woman who had set foot in Canton.

Several weeks more elapsed before the British plenipotentiary allowed himself to be finally disillusioned. Then he issued a proclamation to the merchants warning them to be prepared to leave the factories at a moment's notice, while the inevitable Nemesis was moved close up for the protection of the foreign community generally. The Chinese had employed the greatest ingenuity in masking their warlike preparations, and even at the last, when they saw that concealment was no longer possible, they attempted to allay the apprehensions of the foreigners by issuing an edict in order "to calm the feelings of the merchants and to tranquillise commercial business,"—their object being, as it was confidently alleged, to take the whole community by surprise and completely annihilate them.

Although thus attempting to lull the foreigners, the Chinese authorities had previously warned the natives, through the elders, to remove their families and effects from the neighbourhood of the river. On the very day after the soothing proclamation, May 21, the signal for the renewal of the war was given by the launching of a number of ingeniously con-



H.M. SHIPS IMOGEN AND ANDROMACHE PASSING BOCCA TIGRIS BATTERIES.

trived fire-rafts, which were dropped down by the tide upon the English vessels with the design of burning them at their anchors. This scheme failed in its object, partly from miscalculation, — only ten or twelve out of about a hundred being ignited, — and partly from the intrepidity of the British officers and seamen in grappling with those they could reach in their boats, and towing them out of their intended course. Indeed the destructive effects of these elaborate engines were turned on the Chinese themselves, some of the rafts taking the ground close to the city and setting fire to the suburbs. This fiasco was followed on the one side by an attack on the forts and the destruction of a very large fleet of war-junks, and on the other by the demolition and pillage of the foreign factories, not however without some curious discrimination.

The attack on Canton was now undertaken in earnest. On the 26th May the heights in rear of the city had been captured and were held in force, so that the whole Chinese position was completely commanded. Everything was ready for the assault, which would have been a bloodless affair, an elevation just within the wall affording a military vantage-ground from which the whole city could have been dominated without the least risk by a very small force. At this critical moment Captain Elliot appeared to stay the hand of Sir Hugh Gough and Commodore Senhouse, the commanders of the military and naval forces respectively. Captain Elliot had, in fact, granted a truce in order to discuss, not the terms of peace with China, but merely the conditions on which the British forces should retire from Canton. The principal

of these were that the city should be evacuated by all the Chinese and Manchu troops, estimated at 45,000, over whom the authorities proved that they had perfect control; and that the authorities should pay the ransom of $6,000,000, in consideration of which all the river forts were to be restored to the Chinese, under the proviso that the forts below Whampoa were not to be rearmed until the final conclusion of peace. From first to last 1200 pieces of cannon had been captured or destroyed in these river forts, which would in any case have taken some time to replace.

The incident which closed this transaction having an important bearing upon future events, it merits particular attention. Two days after the agreement was concluded the armed Braves of the city and locality began to assemble in great numbers on the heights threatening the British position, and they even advanced to the attack. Fighting ensued, which lasted two days, during which the Chinese force was constantly augmenting, and, though more than once dispersed by the British, it was only to reassemble in greater numbers and renew the attack. Thus the ransoming of the city seemed to be but the beginning of strife. At length the British commander insisted upon the prefect of Canton going out to the Braves and causing them to disperse, after which the British force re-embarked. The incident left on the minds of the Cantonese the conviction that they were invincible, for they took to themselves the whole credit of expelling the barbarians.[1] This belief was destined to bear much bitter fruit in after-days.

[1] In a proclamation issued in 1844 it was said, "Remember how our people were persuaded not to fall upon and massacre your soldiers."

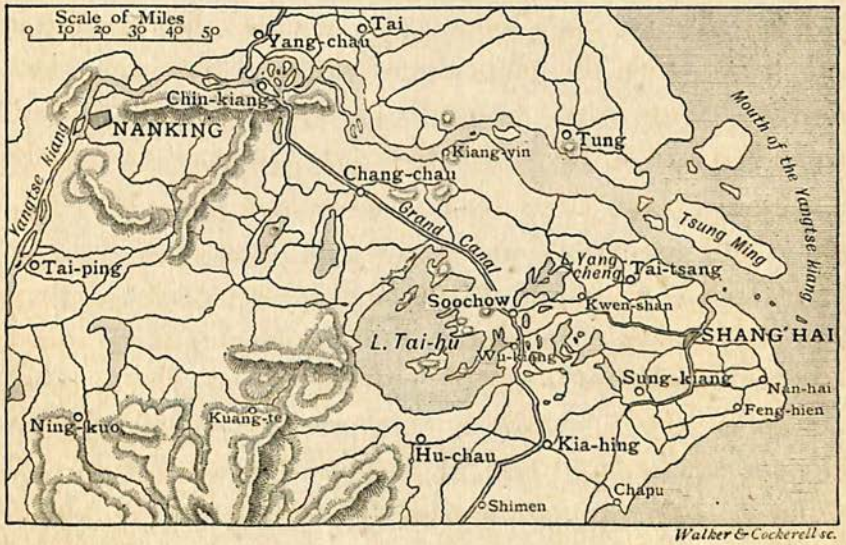
The emperor repudiated all these pacific arrangements, and ordered that as soon as the English ships had withdrawn new and stronger forts were to be erected and armed. After the anomalous episode of Canton the war was transferred to the northern coasts. Hongkong, with its capacious and well-sheltered harbour and facilities for ingress and egress, was found to be an admirable naval and military base, and the island soon became a scene of intense activity afloat and ashore. The Chinese were attracted to it in great numbers. Tradesmen, mechanics, builders, carpenters, servants, boatmen, market-people, and common labourers flocked into the island, where one and all found profitable employment both under the British Government and in connection with the commercial establishment which had already been set up there. It is estimated that during the year 1841 not less than 15,000 natives from the mainland had taken up their quarters in the new possession of Great Britain, and were naturally of material assistance in the fitting out of the great expedition which was about to invade the eastern seaboard. One drawback, unfortunately, soon showed itself in the sickness and mortality of the troops, who were attacked by a fever attributed, rightly or wrongly, to the breaking up of the soil, which was composed of decomposed granite. Possibly, however, the hardships of campaigning in the unhealthy delta of the Canton river predisposed the men, when the excitement was over, to attacks of the diseases associated with the name of Hongkong. This disastrous epidemic left to the colony an evil reputation, which survived many years of hygienic improvement.

The agreement concluded between Captain Elliot and Kishen, repudiated by the emperor, was no less emphatically disapproved of by the Government of Great Britain. Captain Elliot was recalled, and quitted China on August 24, Sir Henry Pottinger, the new plenipotentiary, having arrived, in company with Vice-Admiral Sir William Parker, on the 10th, to the great joy of every one. The war was thereupon pursued systematically and with vigour.

The twelve months over which these operations extended will not seem long if we consider that the coast of China, with its marvellous archipelago, was then scarcely known to navigators; that the ships were propelled by sails; that they had to operate nearly 1000 miles from their base—and that a place of which they held precarious possession; and that the greatest caution was required in moving a squadron of fifty vessels, besides transports and store-ships. Indeed the real matter for surprise—and it reflects the highest credit on the officers concerned—is that in an expedition of such magnitude, including the advance of 200 miles up the Yangtze, a river till then quite unknown, so few casualties occurred. It should also be remembered that in this war against China precautions of quite unusual stringency were observed for the protection of private property and the avoidance of injury to the population.

The Chinese Government was allowed ample time for reflection between each step in the hostile advance, yet neither the capture of the coast forts and cities nor the incursions which were made from convenient points into the interior sufficed to bring the Court of Peking to sue for terms. Amoy, Chinhae, Chapu,

Ningpo, Wusung, and Shanghai were taken in succession, and Chusan was reoccupied. The Chinese defence of these various places was far from contemptible, excepting only as regarded the antiquity of its methods and the inefficiency of its weapons. The fortifications at the various ports were very extensive, and were mounted with an immense number of guns. The troops in most cases stood bravely the attack by superior weapons and skill, in several cases waiting for



YANGTZE AND GRAND CANAL.

the bayonet charge before abandoning their earthworks. It was not until the fleet had made its way up the Yangtze, secured the Grand Canal which connects the rich rice-growing provinces with the northern capital, and had taken its station in front of Nanking, the southern capital, that the strategic centre of the empire was reached.

At Nanking, therefore, commissioners were appointed to treat with Sir Henry Pottinger, and as they had

nothing to do but acquiesce in his demands with the best grace, while at the same time saving the face of the Imperial Government as much as the circumstances of such a surrender would allow, the long-desired treaty of commerce was at last concluded on August 29, 1842.

The two Imperial Commissioners intrusted with the negotiations were men of the highest distinction and rank, Ilipu and Kiying. Of the latter it was said that he was the first high officer who since the commencement of the war had dared to tell the naked truth to his imperial master. Their joint memorial to the throne, on which the imperial instructions for signing the treaty were based, was remarkable for its clearness, simplicity, and outspokenness, contrasting in these respects strongly with the customary tone of flattery, evasion, and bombast. Of Kiying we shall hear further in the sequel.

Ilipu was already an old man and infirm. His name is never mentioned by contemporary writers without respect amounting almost to veneration. Governor-general in Nanking, he had been appointed Imperial Commissioner and ordered to Ningpo to get the dependent island Chusan cleared of foreigners. He had thus been brought into communication with the foreign commanders in connection with the occupation of Ningpo and the capture of Chapu, out of which a correspondence ensued alike honourable to both sides. A number of Chinese prisoners, after having their wounds attended to and their wants provided for, with a small present of money, were restored to liberty by the British commander. This unexpected action seemed to impress Ilipu, who in return sent down

to Chapu a number of English prisoners, who had been for some time incarcerated at Hangchow, treating them handsomely, according to his lights. The despatch of the prisoners was accompanied by a respectful letter to Sir Hugh Gough and Sir William Parker, probably the first communication deserving to be so styled that ever passed between a high Chinese officer and a foreigner. These circumstances augured well for the success of future intercourse. Ilipu was sent to Canton as High Commissioner to arrange details as to the carrying out of the treaty. He died there, and was succeeded by Kiying, who brought the ratification of the treaty to Hongkong in June 1843.

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CHAPTER V.

THE TREATY OF 1842.

A one-sided bargain—Not deemed by Chinese obligatory—Condemned by powerful parties—The Chinese conscience against it—Fulfilment therefore could not be voluntary—The Chinese and Manchus compared—Repugnance to treaty common to them both—Much determination needed to obtain fulfilment.

OUT of such antecedents in peace and war it was a moral impossibility that normal international relations between Chinese and foreigners should follow the conclusion of peace.

The treaty signed at Nanking by Sir Henry Pottinger in 1842, simple and explicit in its grammatical construction, and fulfilling as far as words could do so all the conditions of a charter of fair trade, was tainted with the vices of a one-sided bargain. Indeed the Chinese did not regard it in the light of a bargain at all, but as a yoke temporarily imposed on them which it was their business to shake off. Sir John Davis has told us that "at Peking almost every Chinese of rank and influence was opposed to the fulfilment of the stipulations of the treaty. The negotiators of it shared in the odium of the cowardly generals who had deceived their sovereign by false representations of their powers of defence." The

obligations of the treaty, in fact, sat so lightly on their consciences, that only so far as they were held rigorously to its provisions would they observe them.

The open-mouthed denunciation of the treaty in high quarters was but the textual confirmation of what was obvious in the nature of the case, that the Chinese Government regarded the treaty of Nanking as a *ruse de guerre*, a mere expedient for purchasing present relief, "a temporary arrangement in order to recover from our losses."

The official animus and the political conscience were thus entirely on the side of what we call bad faith, a state of things which has come down unabated to our own time, though prudence on the one side and pressure on the other have generally toned down the outward manifestation of it.

Fulfilment of the treaty under these circumstances could only be hoped for by the actual employment of the coercive agency which had secured its signature, or by the conviction, firmly rooted in the minds of the Chinese, that such agency was always ready to be invoked. But as perpetual coercion on the part of Great Britain was not to be thought of, the establishment and maintenance of satisfactory working relations demanded on the part of the British agents responsible for the execution of the treaty a rare combination of personal qualities. They had, in fact, to assume a power which they did not possess, to trade upon the prestige which their country had gained by the success of its arms, trusting that their pretensions might be tacitly acquiesced in. Had this attitude been consistently maintained, in small as well as in great things, from the very outset, there is no telling

whether the observance of the treaty might not have become a matter of Chinese routine, and in time acquired the sacred authority of custom. But the contrary was the case, and it was not the observance but the non-observance of the treaty that was allowed to acquire the sanction of custom.

The conduct of the war offered conclusive evidence that though certain individuals, from either better knowledge or higher principle than their contemporaries, were inclined to meet their enemies fairly, yet the conscience of the State, as authoritatively represented in the emperor's edicts, rejected as absurd the notion of keeping any kind of faith with the barbarians. Hence the barren result of all appeals to the binding authority of the compact, unless when backed by force; hence also the efficacy of every application of force in the dealings of foreign nations with China whether before or after the treaty of 1842. This consideration is indeed of the essence of our Chinese relations, though habitually ignored in the conduct of our intercourse.

As regards the attitude of the Chinese Government towards foreigners in connection with the war and the peace, an interesting and suggestive distinction has been drawn by Sir John Davis between the two elements in the Government, the Chinese and the Manchu,—a distinction which has been independently made by other observers. It is therefore a point well worthy of being kept in view both in the conduct of official intercourse and in speculations as to the future of the Chinese empire. Sir John Davis, who, first as a Company's agent in China, then for a short time as British envoy before the war, and eventually

chief superintendent of trade for some years after that event, had much experience in dealing with officials of the two races, is emphatic on the point that moderation and humanity were always found on the side of the Manchus, while implacable ferocity allied with treachery distinguished the Chinese officials. The war, he says, was solely the work of the latter, the peace, of the former. "New Tajin was a thorough Chinese, and, like the rest of his tribe, vociferous for war while it was absent, but unable to sustain its presence; while the Tartars were generally advocates for peace, though they did their duty in an emergency." The antithetic character of the two races shown collectively and individually has been a matter of general remark by foreigners acquainted with both. "Ilipu," says Davis, "a Manchu by birth, possessed the un-Chinese quality of straightforwardness and honesty of purpose. . . . As an early adviser of the sovereign, he had endeavoured to dissuade him from risking a foreign quarrel in making the English a party to the question of restricting the consumption of opium among his own subjects."

The Manchu Kishen, who replaced Commissioner Lin on the failure of the latter, was also a man of good faith. He did his best first to avoid and then to terminate the war, and in the middle of it concluded a convention with Captain Elliot by which Hongkong was ceded and six millions of dollars were to be paid as ransom for Canton. Yet having been admonished by the emperor "to arouse the patriotism of the nation and send the heads of the rebellious barbarians to Peking in baskets, for to treat them reasonably is out of the question," he had to excuse himself by resort

to a false pretence of treachery. The convention he represented as a ruse, because "his reinforcements were yet far off"; but he declared that, "bearing the barbarians many a grudge," he only abided his time "for exterminating them whenever it can be done." In the impeachment of that capable statesman one of the charges was, "You gave to the barbarians Hongkong as a dwelling-place, contrary to our law of indivisibility," to which he was fain to answer, "I pretended to do so, from the mere force of circumstances, to put them off for a time, but had no such serious intention; . . . a mere feint to avert the further outrages of the barbarians."

He took up similar ground in apologising for the conduct of Admiral Kwan, a brave and respectable officer, who had asked and obtained an armistice in the Canton river: "He has agreed to a truce with the barbarians merely to gain time and be in a state to resist them."

The courtesy of the Manchus was no less conspicuous. Lord Jocelyn, as quoted by Mr Hunter, remarked, after a meeting with Kishen: "He rose at our entrance and received the mission with great courtesy and civility. Indeed the manners of these high mandarins would have done honour to any courtier in the most polished Court of Europe." A French envoy was similarly impressed in an interview with Kiying: "I have visited many European Courts," he said, "and have met and known many of the most distinguished men belonging to them, but for polished manners, dignity, and ease I have never seen these Chinese surpassed."

While the noblest of the officials were thus driven to assume a perfidy which was not really in their heart

in order to accommodate themselves to the prevailing temper, the baser minds were clamouring open-mouthed for meeting honour with dishonour. For it is instructive to recall that the most truculent officials—Commissioner Lin, for example — based their slippery strategy on the known good faith of the barbarians, "which made their engagements sacred," as the Roman generals took advantage of the Sabbatical prejudices of the Jews. The Chinese could afford to play fast and loose with their end of the rope, knowing the other end to be secured to a pillar of good faith. The commissioners who signed the treaty in their report to the throne also testified that "the English had acted with uniform sincerity."

The confiding spirit of the English tempted the common run of Chinese officials to practise systematic deception. Thus a disreputable Tartar, who was governor of Canton, reported that he had "resolved to get rid of them by a sum of money, as by far the cheapest way. . . . But once having got rid of them, and blocked up all the passages leading to Canton, we may again cut off their commerce, and place them in the worst possible position," thus anticipating almost to the letter what took place at the Taku forts in the second war between 1858-59. A pamphlet, attributed to Commissioner Lin, whose wanton atrocities had provoked the war, after testifying to the habitual good faith of the barbarian, urged the Government "never to conclude a peace: an armistice, a temporary arrangement for the present, in order to recover from our losses, is all we desire."

The Manchu and Chinese races are the complement of each other in the economy of the State. The

Manchus, with their military heredity, were best fitted for the imperial *rôle*, while the Chinese are by tradition rather men of business than administrators. From which it may be inferred that the material progress of the country will rest more with the Chinese with all their faults than with the Manchus with their governing instincts. The Peking Court, indeed, has been long under the numerically preponderant influence of the Chinese, and except in matters of dynastic interest they are Chinese rather than Manchu ethics which govern the acts of State. The counsels of such men as Lin and the Chinese party generally prevailed, as we have seen, over those of the distinguished Manchus, some of them belonging to the imperial family, who had to do with the foreign imbroglio, and it was in full accord with Chinese sentiment that the Emperor Tao-kuang was brought to declare that such a nation as the English should not be allowed to exist on the earth.

Much of the hostility to the treaty may no doubt be fairly referable to the military humiliation of a Government to whom war was rebellion and rebellion parricide. Nor is the exasperation of the Chinese against their conquerors to be measured by those chivalrous standards which have been evolved from the traditions of nations accustomed, even in war, to meet as equals. They were playing the game under a different set of rules. But when every such allowance has been made, the moral principle governing Chinese official conduct cannot be designated by any word in Western vocabularies but perfidy. Belligerency as understood by Western nations did not enter into their conception, and their war tactics of kidnapping, poisoning the

water, torturing and massacring prisoners, and so forth, differed little from their procedure in time of peace, being in either case based on the implicit negation of human rights in connection with foreigners.

It may thus be seen what difficulties had to be encountered, even under the treaty, in guiding the intercourse between Chinese and foreigners into safe and peaceable channels; how much depended on the tact and capacity of the newly appointed consuls, and how little assistance they could hope for from the department which commissioned them. For no matter how perspicacious the Home Government might from time to time be, they were as much in the hands of their representatives after as they had been before the war. The distance was too great and the communication too slow for the most vigilant ministry to do more than issue general instructions. "The man on the spot" would act as his judgment or his feelings or his power prompted as emergencies might arise, and we have seen how even the clear intentions of Lord Palmerston were thwarted by the idiosyncrasies of some of his agents in China.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FRUITS OF THE WAR AND PROSPECTS OF PEACE.

Pretensions of British and Chinese irreconcilable—International equality inconceivable by Chinese—British aims as set forth by merchants—The inadequacy of their demands—Clearer insight of their Government—Unsteadiness of British policy—Consistency of Chinese policy—Treaty to be observed so far as needful to obviate another war—Canton irreconcilable—Ransoming the city in 1841 the cause of much subsequent trouble there.

THE pretensions of the contending parties being absolutely irreconcilable, no spontaneous accommodation was possible between them. The Chinese could never acknowledge, or even comprehend, equality among nations, the single relationship of victor and victim being the beginning and the end of their international ethics. If, therefore, they ever set before their minds the issue to be decided by a war, it must have assumed the brutal but simple oriental form, Whose foot is to be on the other's neck? The question, then, to be submitted to the ordeal of battle between Great Britain and China was, Which should be the uppermost; which should henceforth dictate to the other? In justice to the Chinese, it must be admitted that they realised more clearly than their adversary what the quarrel really signified. What disconcerted them and led to chronic misunderstanding in the sequel was the after-discovery

that the victor was slack in claiming the fruits of his victory. Whether they really expected success to attend their arms may be an open question, for their ingrained habit of boasting of their prowess may have deceived even themselves. With this caveat the temper in which the Chinese entered on hostilities may be gathered from a proclamation of the High Commissioner and the viceroy of Canton in September 1839:—

> Let it be asked [they say], though the foreign soldiers be numerous, can they amount to one tenth-thousandth part of ours? Though it be allowed that the foreign guns are powerful and effective, can their ammunition be employed for any long period and not be expended? If they venture to enter the port, there will be but a moment's blaze and they will be turned to cinders. If they dare to go on shore, it is permitted to all the people to seize and kill them. How can these foreigners then remain unawed?

From the British point of view the object of the China expedition was set forth with conspicuous moderation by the merchants of London and of the great industrial centres. And here it seems not unfitting to remark upon the lively and intelligent interest which the commercial community of that period was wont to take in the affairs of China. The trade of Great Britain and of British India with that country had not reached the annual value of £12,000,000 sterling including treasure, yet we find in the years 1839 and 1840 a series of ably drawn memorials to Government bearing the signatures of all the important houses in the kingdom, showing the most intimate acquaintance with everything that was passing in China, even though they failed to apprehend the full signification thereof. The signatories of these papers pointed out

without circumlocution the measures necessary to be taken in order to place the commercial interests of her Majesty's subjects on a satisfactory footing. It would appear, therefore, that it was from the independent merchants and manufacturers of Great Britain and British India that the true inspiration came to Lord Palmerston, who was then Foreign Minister; and not the inspiration only, but the courage which was needed to throw over the pusillanimous traditions of the Honourable East India Company, and to apply the maxims of common-sense to our relations with the Chinese authorities.

Among the memorials addressed to, and by request of, the Foreign Secretary, that from the East India and China Association, representing the merchants of London interested in the Far East, gives perhaps the clearest exposition of the whole case from the commercial point of view. After a succinct historical *résumé* of our successes and failures in China, each traced to its cause, the memorialists state their opinion that "submission will now only aggravate the evil, and that an attempt should be made, supported by a powerful force, to obtain such concessions from China as would place the trade upon a secure and permanent footing." And they conclude with an outline of the commercial treaty which they think would conduce to that result.

First. Admission not only to Canton, but to certain ports to the northward — say Amoy, Fuh-cho-foo, Ningpo, and the Yang-che-keang and Kwan-chou—situated between 29° and 32° north latitude, near the silk, nankin, and tea districts, and it is on this coast that the chief demand for British woollens, longells, and camlets exists.

Second. Commercial relations to be maintained at these places, or at Canton, generally with the Chinese natives; but if the trade be limited to certain *hongs*, which we must strongly deprecate, then the Government to be guarantees of the solvency of such parties so chosen by it.

Third. That British subjects in China carrying on a legitimate trade shall not be treated by the Government or its officials as inferiors, but be left free in their social and domestic relations to adopt European customs, to possess warehouses, and to have their wives and families with them, and to be under the protection of the Chinese laws from insult and oppression.

Fourth. That a tariff of duties, inwards and outwards, be fixed and agreed upon by the British and Chinese Governments, and no alteration be made but by mutual consent.

Fifth. That the Queen's representative, as superintendent of the trade, be allowed direct communication with the Emperor and his Ministers, as well as with the local authorities; and that he be permitted to reside at Peking, or at a given port, for the protection of British subjects and the regulation of the trade.

Sixth. That in the event of any infraction of the Chinese laws, the punishment for the same shall be confined to the offender; and British subjects shall not be considered responsible for the acts of each other, but each man for his own—the innocent not being confounded with the guilty.

Seventh. That supposing the Chinese to refuse opening their ports generally, the cession by purchase, or otherwise, of an island be obtained, upon which a British factory could be established.

Upon terms such as these the British trade with China could, we think, be carried on with credit and advantage to this country; and if force must be used to obtain them, we cannot believe that the people of Great Britain and the European community in general would offer any objection to its exercise; at least we humbly suggest that the adoption of this course is worth the trial, for if it be not followed, the only alternative seems to be the abandonment of this important and growing commerce to smugglers and to piracy.—We have, &c.,

G. G. DE H. LARPENT.
JOHN ABEL SMITH.
W. CRAWFORD.

These stipulations, and the hypothetical form in which they were advanced, show how imperfect, after all, was the grasp which the mercantile community had as yet taken of the situation. While fully recognising the necessity of force and urging its employment, they yet seem to have clung to the hope that in some way or another the expected treaty was to be the result of amicable negotiation. They did not clearly realise that as without force nothing could be obtained, so with force everything could be.

And from what an abyss the status of British subjects had come to be regarded when it could be deemed a boon that they be placed under the protection of Chinese law—instead of being kept for ever outside the pale of law and of common human suffrages! Fortunately the Government, profiting by past experience and better versed in political science, held a more consistent course than that marked out for it by the merchants, and went far beyond them in the concessions demanded of the Chinese Government. Instead of trusting to Chinese law, protection for the persons and property of British subjects was provided for under the laws of Great Britain, a stipulation in the treaty which has been the palladium of the liberties of all nationalities in China for sixty years. The ambiguity which characterised the public appreciation of the China question, even when expressed through the most authoritative channel, deserves to be noted here on account of the influence it was destined to exercise on the future conduct of affairs; for though the British Government was perspicacious in the conduct of the war and in arranging terms of peace, yet, lacking the sustained support of a well-instructed public opinion,

its Chinese policy was subject to many backslidings. During protracted intervals of inadvertence the pernicious influences which it was the purpose of the war to suppress were allowed to regain lost ground, with the result that during the whole sixty years our Chinese intercourse has been marred by the chronic recrudescence of the old hostile temper which inspired the outrages before the war.

On the part of the Chinese Court there was undoubtedly a desire for such substantial fulfilment of the treaty as might obviate the risk of a renewal of the war. The final instruction of the Emperor Tao-kuang while the negotiations were proceeding was, "Be careful to make such arrangements as shall cut off for ever all cause of war, and do not leave anything incomplete or liable to doubt." And so long, at least, as the material guarantee of Chusan was retained by Great Britain—that is, until 1846—no open violation was to be apprehended. The Chinese war party, however—as distinguished from the more reasonable Manchus—were furious in their denunciations of the treaty; and it was the opinion of Sir John Davis that the situation was only saved by the financial exhaustion of the country: "the ordinary taxes could not be collected." There would in any circumstances have been a strong presumption of covert evasion being resorted to, a presumption which was reduced to a certainty by the indulgence extended to that ancient focus of mischief, Canton. By one of those aberrations of judgment which it is scarcely unfair to call characteristic, Captain Elliot desired to save Canton, of all places in the Chinese empire, from the pressure of war, and in 1841, in the midst of hostilities on the coast, he accepted ransom for the city,

a transaction so inexplicable that her Majesty's Treasury, at a loss what to do with the money, after much explanatory correspondence declared itself unable to appropriate the fund in the manner intended by her Majesty's representative. The arrogance of the Cantonese had been so immeasurably puffed up by this misguided clemency that the peace left the populace of the city and district absolutely convinced of their invincibility. As the eradication of this dangerous delusion was among the primary purposes of the war, so the pandering to the pride of Canton proved, as was inevitable, the malignant root of all subsequent bitterness.[1]

[1] It is impossible to review, however summarily, the events of that period without free reference to the officer who was during the time charged with the care of British interests in China. But no pretence is made in these pages to pass a verdict on the public record of Captain Elliot. His acts involved too many solecisms in finance, for one thing, to have escaped the attention of Parliament; but, like others who come before that tribunal, he was neither attacked on his merits nor defended on his merits. None could question the sincerity of the encomiums passed by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Melbourne on his "courage, coolness, and self-devotion"; to which might well be added a quite exceptional fearlessness of responsibility. But the first representatives of the British Crown in China were doomed to failure by the nature of their commission. The terms of their instructions were more than contradictory—they were mutually destructive. To conciliate the Chinese while opening official relations with them was to mix the ingredients of an explosive. A dilemma was, in fact, presented unwittingly by the British Government to their agents. Lord Napier impaled himself on one horn—that of claiming a diplomatic status; Captain Elliot on the other—that of gaining over the Government by conciliation; and no earthly skill could have saved either of them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW INTERCOURSE: CANTON, 1842–1847.

The fundamental difficulty of giving effect to the treaty — Necessity for thoroughness — Character of Kiying, Imperial Commissioner — His amicable relations with British Superintendent of Trade—Turbulence of Canton — Outrages on British merchants — Condoned by Chinese Government, if not encouraged both by imperial and provincial authorities — Sir John Davis's testimony — His passive treatment—False policy of allowing Chinese Government to screen itself behind the mob—Postponement of entry into city—Climax in affair—Evacuation of Chusan—Increase of insults at Canton—Sir John Davis palliates and then asks for redress—Sudden reaction in his policy consequent on Lord Palmerston's becoming Foreign Secretary—His clear despatches—Sir John Davis makes a raid on the river defences—Has the city at his mercy—But makes an unsatisfactory agreement—Withdraws protection in spite of remonstrance of merchants—Massacre of six Englishmen in 1847—Redress—Whole question of British protection brought up — Canton consul objects to ship of war at factories — Palmerston orders one to be there—Agreement to defer entry into city till 1849—People intoxicated with their success—The potency of the people—Its limitations—Interesting correspondence—Final agreement dictated by people and signed by Sir John Davis and Kiying.

To carry out a treaty which was odious to Chinese officials in general, most of all to the bureaucracy and populace of the main centre of intercourse, Canton, required an effort analogous to that of maintaining a body of water at an artificial level—success in either case depending on completeness. It is easier to keep the reservoir intact than to compromise with leakages, as in certain conditions of the human will total abstinence

is less irksome than moderation. To carry out the treaty, the whole treaty, and nothing but the treaty, would seem, therefore, to have been the obvious course for British agents to follow, a course suited equally to strong and to weak characters. This was, no doubt, understood by some, though not by all, of the British staff, — fifty years ago, as in our own day; but in the distribution of the *personnel* it fell out that the fundamental condition of success was least realised just where it was most imperatively needed — to wit, at that intermittent volcano, Canton. For even the close proximity of the chief superintendent—only 120 miles distant — at Hongkong was insufficient to keep the cistern of our Canton relations water-tight. Sir John Davis, on the whole a competent official, shared to some extent in the common human imperfection of knowing what was right without always doing, or being able to do, it. He is indeed himself the most candid witness to the breakdown of the patchwork policy which he permitted to grow up in Canton, perhaps because he could not do otherwise.

The first British plenipotentiaries under treaty were exceptionally fortunate in their Chinese colleague, the High Commissioner, Kiying. He being a near kinsman of the emperor, and, with Ilipu, the principal instrument in promoting the conclusion of peace, his appointment must have been considered the best recognition the Court could accord of the validity of the treaty. "Kiying," says Sir J. Davis, "was by far the most remarkable person with whom Europeans have ever come in contact in that part of the world; the most elevated in rank as well as

the most estimable in character." Intercourse with Kiying, therefore, was pleasant, and conducive to self-respect.

Both officials were unfortunate in having to reckon with an intractable peace-disturbing element in their mutual relations. This is the name which, for want of a more exact designation, must be given to the people of Canton, "who, through every event since 1839, remained incorrigible in the real hatred and affected contempt for foreigners."

It has always been, and still is, the practice of the Chinese authorities to make use of the populace in their aggressions on strangers. There is at all times in China, as in most countries, an inexhaustible fund of anti-foreign sentiment ready to be drawn upon by agitators, whether within the Government circle or not, and subject also to spontaneous explosion. By working on these latent passions, and inflaming the popular mind by the dissemination of odious calumnies, Government could at any moment foment an anti-foreign raid. It was a political engine in the use of which Chinese officialdom had become thoroughly expert. It was tempting by its cheapness, and it had, moreover, the special fascination for them that in the event of being called to account for outrage they could disavow the excesses of the "poor ignorant people." Such a force, however, is not without its drawbacks to those who employ it. Like a fire, which is easy to kindle but hard to control, the popular excitement was apt to extend beyond the limits assigned by its instigators, and many an engineer has thus been hoist by his own petard. "Otho had not sufficient authority to prevent crime, though he could command it," says Tacitus; and

the observation fits the case of successive generations of Chinese rulers as if it had been written for each one of them separately.

The rowdy population of Canton enjoyed special immunity from official control. Not only had they been habitually pampered for two hundred years, and diligently taught to tyrannise over and despise foreigners, but during the war they were allowed to organise themselves independently of the authorities, and to claim the honour of driving the invaders off on the occasion when the city was admitted to ransom. On the mendacious reports of these transactions reaching him, the emperor not only bestowed rewards on the leaders but encouraged the populace to further hostile measures against the foreigners. The liberal distribution of arms during the war proved afterwards a powerful incentive to crimes of violence, of which outrages on foreigners were but one development.

The self-organised, self-trained bands of Canton were by no means disposed to submit tamely to the new order of things, in the settlement of which they had had no voice. They had bettered their official instruction in the storing up and practising of hatred and contempt for foreigners, and they did not choose suddenly to recant merely because their Government had been coerced into making a treaty in a distant province. Consequently, within three short months of its signature notices were placarded inciting the people to violence; very soon an organised attack on the British factories was made, and the buildings were burned down.

So far from attempting to repress such outrages, the governor of Canton, "while the ruins were still smok-

ing," reported to the throne that the people "in their natural indignation had committed some excesses against the grasping barbarians," and a very gracious answer was vouchsafed to an offer of the people of certain outlying villages to join the armed bands of the city. The Imperial Government as well as the provincial government was thus identified with the popular hostility to foreigners, and opposition to the fulfilment of the treaty. "The excesses of the Canton mob," writes Sir John Davis, "were perpetually and annually resumed, up to the public decapitation of the four murderers of the Englishmen in 1847, with the subsequent punishment of eleven more."

But this is surely remarkable testimony from the Minister of Great Britain who was charged with the protection of his nationals[1] from wrong? With British garrisons in occupation of Kulangsu and Chusan, a military and naval force in Hongkong, and a Chinese commissioner professedly willing to afford protection and redress to foreigners, the acquiescence of the British authorities in these recurrent outrages seems to stand in need of explanation. The native authorities, it was clear, would not, even if they dared, coerce the Canton populace. Kiying himself, though meaning to be just, and ready to enforce redress against individual culprits, recoiled before the mob. So it would appear did the British representative, who, though vigilant in requiring compliance with the treaty in minor respects, seemed to be paralysed whenever the Cantonese were in question.

[1] This convenient term, borrowed from the French, saves many periphrases and sometimes an ambiguity. Neither "fellow-countrymen," "fellow-subjects," nor "fellow-citizens" fully expresses the relationship between an official in an extra-territorialised country and those whom he protects and governs.

He had been too long accustomed to their practices not to be aware of the cumulative quality of these outrages, and he was too practical a philosopher not to know the wisdom of arresting the virulent stream at its fountain-head. Yet "the miserable policy of the Chinese Government . . . had permitted the populace of Canton . . . to reach the culminating-point of organised misrule in 1846," British merchants being the sufferers. Why was nothing done to protect them at least from the consequences of this misrule?

The intricacies of the relation between the criminal rabble of Canton and the authorities there it would be hopeless to unravel, just as it would be vain to make such an attempt with regard to analogous cases which are to this day of constant recurrence. But no special penetration is needed to discover the falsity of a policy of allowing an organised government to plead its inability to control its own populace. Once admit such a plea and the security of the stranger is gone, for he has relinquished his hold on the Government without being compensated by any alternative security. Such was the state of things which had been allowed to grow up in Canton, producing the only fruit possible —outrage, ever increasing in violence and ending in massacre.

The postponement of the right of entry into the city conferred by treaty was a test case which gave the Chinese the clue to the weakness of British policy. The consequences would have been less pernicious had the right been frankly surrendered from the first, for to have it merely deferred from time to time on the avowed ground of the populace not being ready to acquiesce in it was to flatter the mob beyond measure

while feeding their passion for violence. It was in this manner that the British Government had "given itself away" to the lawless rowdies of Canton.

The "climax" referred to by Sir John Davis occurred at an interesting juncture of time, for it was in 1846 that the last British soldier quitted Chinese soil, and Sir John Davis testifies that the restoration of Chusan had produced a change for the worse in the tone of the Chinese authorities. Kiying himself forgot his urbanity and acted "with a degree of *brusquerie*, not to say insolence, never before exhibited by him."

A riotous attack on the foreign factories broke out in July 1846, in which the merchants were compelled in a body to defend themselves against an immense number of assailants. For this outbreak Sir John Davis blamed one of the English merchants, and got him irregularly fined by the consul. A murderous assault was committed on two British seamen in the city of Canton in October following. In the ordinary routine he reported the occurrence to the Foreign Office in a despatch of seven lines. "Two English merchant seamen," he said, "having strayed into the town, had been violently ill-used by the populace"; adding that he "considered it to be the duty of the consul to prevent seamen wandering through Canton." He at the same time instructed the consul to find some means of punishing the master of the ship for allowing his men liberty, and proposed placing greater power in the hands of the consul for the restraint of British subjects generally. Above this level the plenipotentiary seemed unable to rise.

In March 1847 an English party of six, including Colonel Chesney, commanding the Royal Artillery in Hongkong, narrowly escaped murder at the hands of a

riotous mob during an excursion up the Canton river. They strayed much farther than the two sailors had done, and if they did not fare worse it was due to the almost miraculous interposition of a Chinese officer with his followers, he himself being roughly handled by the mob. It would not do to apply to Colonel Chesney's case the homœopathic treatment which was thought appropriate to the others, and Sir John Davis made a formal demand on the Chinese authorities for the punishment of the aggressors. The cup of Chinese iniquity was deemed full, and the avenger was at last let loose.

Whence, it is pertinent to ask, came this sudden access of vigour in the British representative?

The juncture of time above referred to was interesting from another point of view, for coincidently with the evacuation of Chusan and the renewed arrogance of the Chinese, a political event took place in the western hemisphere which had an important bearing on the whole attitude of Great Britain. There was a change of Government, Palmerston succeeding Aberdeen at the Foreign Office. The influence of Lord Palmerston on Chinese affairs during his long public career was so remarkable, that the ebb and flow of British prestige may be traced as closely by his periods of office as the course of the oceanic tide by the phases of the moon. Let any patriotic Englishman ransack the records of the sixty odd years of that statesman's full activity, and he will find no despatch or speech on the subject of China, even down to our own day, that will afford him such genuine satisfaction as those emanating from Lord Palmerston. They are so much the embodiment

of common-sense that they might sometimes be considered commonplace; practical, true, clear as a bugle-note. He had been barely six months in office when one of his terse despatches to Sir John Davis turned that cautious official for the time being into a hero. The astonishment of Sir John may be imagined when, in reply to his placid report of the outrage on the two seamen, he received a curt communication from the Foreign Office in which his attention was directed to the punishment, not of the victims, but of the perpetrators, of the outrage.

I have [wrote Lord Palmerston, January 12, 1847] to instruct you to demand the punishment of the parties guilty of this outrage; and you will, moreover, inform the Chinese authorities in plain and distinct terms that the British Government will not tolerate that a Chinese mob shall with impunity maltreat British subjects in China whenever they get them into their power; and that if the Chinese authorities will not by the exercise of their own power punish and prevent such outrages, the British Government will be obliged to take the matter into their own hands.

Sir John Davis was the more ready to respond to this stirring appeal that it reached him just as he had entered on a correspondence with the Chinese respecting the attack on Colonel Chesney's party. The turn of the tide was marked with unusual distinctness in a single sentence of the plenipotentiary's despatch dated March 27, 1847. "The records of the Foreign Office," wrote Sir John, "will convince your lordship that during the last three years I have been rigidly tied down by my instructions to the most forbearing policy. . . . The time has, in my opinion, certainly arrived when decision becomes

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necessary and further forbearance impolitic." The inspiration of these instructions may be inferred from a speech of Lord Stanley's in 1845, in which he said, speaking of China, "I believe, so far as our later experience has gone, that there is no nation which more highly values public faith in others; and up to the present moment I am bound to say there never was a government or a nation which more strictly and conscientiously adhered to the literal fulfilment of the engagements into which it had entered." This from a Minister of the Crown, after three years of continuous outrages in Canton and of refusal to fulfil a specific article in the treaty, reflects either on the superintendent of trade in China as having withheld information from the Government, or on the Government itself in arriving at conclusions diametrically opposed to the tenor of their agent's despatches. If it be any justification of the Government theory to say so, the sentiments expressed by Lord Stanley were echoed by the newspapers of the day. "The Chinese," said one of them, "have acted with exemplary good faith, nor is there the least probability of their failing in future to do so."

Under the new afflatus, and backed handsomely by the naval and military commanders, Sir John Davis proceeded to prick the bubble of mob lawlessness and to reduce the Anglo-Chinese relations to working order. This he did by a sudden raid on the Canton river defences, without apparently any diplomatic preliminaries. By a brilliant feat of arms General D'Aguilar with a detachment from the Hongkong garrison, conveyed by three small steamers of the China squadron, swept the defences of the Canton

river, blew up the magazines, spiked 827 pieces of heavy cannon, and placed the city of Canton "entirely at our mercy, . . . all without the loss of one British life." Under the intoxication of such a triumph the plenipotentiary might be pardoned the illusion that the Canton troubles were now at an end. "The Chinese yielded in five minutes what had been delayed as many months." And yet it proved to be a fool's paradise after all in which he found shelter, for the old fatality of half-measures that has marred so many British victories overshadowed Sir John Davis's first essay in diplomacy. The agreement in seven articles concluded with Ki-ying on April 6, 1847, contained such blemishes as the British negotiator could perceive clearly enough when the work of other officials was in question. Having laid down broadly that the good faith of the Chinese Government bore a direct relation to the hostages they had given, yet the plenipotentiary, when he came to business on his own account, abandoned the securities which were actually in his hands, and, either from misgivings of some sort, or under the impulse of a sudden reconversion, he threw himself unreservedly on the good faith of the Chinese without any guarantee whatever.

With regard to the protection to be afforded to the merchants and the prevention of attacks upon them, Lord Palmerston wrote in December 1846: "Wherever British subjects are placed in danger, in a situation which is accessible to a British ship of war, thither a British ship of war ought to be, and will be ordered, not only to go but to remain as long as its presence may be required. I see no reason for cancelling the

instructions given to you for the constant presence of a ship of war within reach of the factories at Canton." This promise of Lord Palmerston's was the sheet-anchor of the merchants' security. The question of having a ship of war close to the factories divided the mercantile from the local official view, and as the Home Government had so clearly adopted the former, the merchants took courage to stand up for what they deemed their rights. Learning that Sir John Davis, in the plenitude of his military success, had resolved to withdraw all her Majesty's forces from Canton, they ventured to make a strong remonstrance against such a step. Sir John, however, while consenting to the retention of a portion of the force, never allowed himself to be convinced of the need of any such measure. Writing to his Government in August 1847, he declared that "the Canton factories were never less in need of the presence of such a vessel than at present," —an opinion frequently reiterated until November 20, when "for the first time since the peace it may be confidently predicated that a steamer will not be required." This was within sixteen days of the most cruel and revolting massacre of six young Englishmen at Hwang-chu-ke, within three miles of the city. The absence of a ship of war at that moment was deeply deplored, because several of the victims were kept alive long enough to have been rescued had there been any British force at hand.

This massacre naturally produced a profound impression on the Canton community, who felt that their warnings and petitions had been cruelly disregarded. The resident British merchants, in a memorial to Lord Palmerston, quoted his lordship's own instruction as to

the stationing of a British ship of war at Canton, and said "it was with the utmost surprise and regret they beheld that officer [Sir J. Davis] shutting his eyes to the danger that menaced us, . . . and withholding the protection he had been directed to afford." "The heavy calamity which has befallen us," they add, "is the result of this infatuation."

So much for the protection of life and property resulting from the armed expedition of 1847. The value of the new agreement, purely local in its bearing, which was the result of the successful invasion, was esteemed but lightly by the merchants. In their memorial, written in the month of August, they said: "If it is not deemed expedient to carry out a general measure in the manner contemplated by the 4th article of the new agreement, it would be much better that the merchants be again left to themselves"; while respecting the military raid and its consequences, they represented that "the just alarm occasioned by the expedition four months ago, and the excitement kept up by these fruitless negotiations, have done incalculable injury to the trade without bettering the position of foreigners in the least."

Such diverse views of policy held by the principal parties concerned are typical of the relations which have subsisted between the protectors and the protected throughout a great part of the period which has elapsed since the British Government established relations with China in 1834.

These occurrences at Canton and the decided action taken by the British Government brought up in a definite form the whole question of the safety of British interests in China, and the means by which

it was to be secured. The conversion of Sir John Davis, though much, was not everything. The aim of Lord Palmerston's policy was still liable to be deflected by the perturbing influence of a minor planet in the system. The consul in Canton gave him almost as much trouble in his day as the famous Tiverton butcher did afterwards in his; and the patience with which his lordship endeavoured to enlighten his agent on the most elementary principles of human action was admirable. It had been the practice of the consul "to report to your Excellency another wanton and unprovoked attack on the part of the populace upon a party of Englishmen," and at the same time to deprecate any measures of defence, whether by organising volunteers among the residents or having a British ship of war stationed where she could be seen.

The consul's object in all this was to avoid exciting suspicion in the minds of the Chinese populace. Sir John Davis, who had all along agreed with the consul, had now to tell his subordinate that "Viscount Palmerston was of opinion that we shall lose all advantages which we have gained by the war if we take the low tone which has been adopted at Canton."

> We must stop [continued his lordship] on the very threshold any attempt on their part to treat us otherwise than as their equals. . . . The Chinese must learn and be convinced that if they attack our people and our factories they will be shot. . . . So far from objecting (as the Consul had done) to the armed association, I think it a wise security against the necessity of using force. . . . Depend upon it that the best way of keeping any men quiet is to let them see that you are able and determined to repel force by force, and the Chinese are not in the least different in this respect from the rest of mankind.

In the light of the history of the subsequent fifty years, one is tempted to say that Lord Palmerston's dictum puts the eternal China question in a nutshell.

But when we reflect on the consequences of a man "of great experience" needing such lectures and yet left for years undisturbed at a centre of turbulence like Canton, can we greatly wonder at the periodical harvest of atrocities which followed?

The one important article in the April agreement was that suspending for a definite period of two years the operation of the article of the treaty of Nanking conferring the right of entering the city of Canton and the other ports of trade. Sir John Davis demanded either permission to "return your Excellency's visit in the city, or that a time be specifically named after which there shall be general free ingress for British subjects." To which Kiying replied, "The intention of entering the city to return my visit is excellent. The feelings of the people, however, are not yet reconciled to it." And Kiying easily had his way. Sir John thereupon explicitly sanctioned a definite delay of two years in the exercise of this treaty right, representing the privilege in his report to Lord Palmerston as of little importance.

Such, however, was not the view either of the Chinese or the British community of Canton. The throwing open of the city was by the latter considered the essential object of the recent expedition, and in their memorial to Lord Palmerston the merchants stated that the Braves having declared their determination to oppose the English at all costs, the withdrawal of our troops *re infectâ* "intoxicated all ranks of the people with an imaginary triumph." Exclusion from

the city thus remained as a trophy in the hands of the reactionaries, to become in 1856 the crux of a new dispute and a new war.

It was no imaginary, but a very real, triumph for "the people"; and even looking back on the transaction with the advantage of fifty years' experience, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was an inversion of judgment to have a city entirely at your mercy and then yield to the city instead of making the city yield to you. The least that could have been expected was, that while the troops were on the spot they should have vindicated the treaty of Nanking once for all by opening the city gates and thus eliminating the most pregnant source of future strife.

On one point Sir John Davis was in agreement with the memorialists—namely, in "tracing back the conduct of the Canton populace to the operations of 1841, on which occasion they were spared by our forces at the rear of the city." But the merchants were pointing out to Lord Palmerston that Sir John Davis was himself implicitly following that very precedent.

The China career of Sir John Davis was destined to a tragic finale, for in the midst of a series of decidedly optimistic despatches he was startled by the news of the Hwang-chu-ke murders. Expiation was as prompt as could have been reasonably expected, the High Commissioner not daring to afford provocation for a further punitive expedition which might not have ended quite so easily as that of the previous April.

The Canton imbroglio of 1847 threw into strong relief the potency of the Chinese demos and its relation to the Central Government. The pretensions of the populace and the stress of events drove the Imperial

Government into a corner and forced it to show its hand, with the result that the occult combination which had been the despair of British officials for fourteen years was resolved into its elements, and for a time made amenable to treatment. It was demonstrated by this experiment that though the Imperial Government dared not, except in extremity, oppose any popular movement, yet when necessity required the authorities assumed an easy mastery. Sir John Davis wrote in one of his latest despatches, "Kiying had clearly proved his power over the people when he chooses to exercise it." Coerced themselves, the authorities applied corresponding coercion to the people, even at the behest of foreigners, "truckling" to whom was equally disgraceful to both the Chinese parties. The interaction of the two Powers exemplified in a memorable way the principle of all Chinese intercourse, that boldness begets timidity and gentleness arrogance. When the people asserted themselves the authorities yielded and fell into line with them, and when the authorities asserted themselves the people succumbed. Such were the lessons of the Canton operations of 1847, lessons since forgotten and relearned again and again at ever-increasing cost.

But the relations between the Government and the people bore also a quasi-diplomatic character. They dealt with each other as if they were two Estates of the realm having parallel or concurrent jurisdiction. The most remarkable phase, however, of the popular pretensions which was evolved under the unaccustomed pressure of the British Minister was the attempt of the populace to diplomatise direct with him. So curious an incident may still be studied with profit. The new

departure of the people was the more startling in that they had been hitherto known only as a ferocious and lawless mob addicted to outrage, whose hatred of foreigners gained in bitterness by a long immunity from reprisals. Now that they had felt the "mailed fist" of a man of fact, and were almost in the act of delivering up their own heroes for execution, they sought to parley with the Power they had despised.

The elders of the murderous villages, in the midst of his stern demands, sent a memorial to Sir John Davis full of amity and goodwill. "Come and let us reason together" was the burden of this novel address. The elders proposed a convention for the suppression of outrages, somewhat on the lines of the Kilmainham Treaty, to supersede the law of the land. "The former treaty drawn up in Kiangnan was not well understood by the common people"; in other words, it was wanting in validity, for "the resolutions of Government are in nowise to be compared to those self-imposed by the people. . . . Were not this preferable to the fruitless proclamations and manifestos of government?" "It has, therefore," they say, "been resolved to invite the upright and influential gentry and literati of the whole city to meet together, and, in concert with the wealthy and important merchants of your honourable nation, establish a compact of peace."

Though he could not receive such a communication officially, Sir John Davis forwarded a copy to the Foreign Office, to whom he imparted his belief that the author was no other than Kiying himself—a surmise which was soon confirmed. The paper was extensively circulated; its arguments and phraseology were adopted by Kiying in his official correspondence with

Sir John Davis. "The compact of peace" which closed their negotiations amounted to no more, indeed, than police protection for foreigners in their country walks, which, however, was counterbalanced by a new restriction excluding them from the villages as they had already been from the city. The interesting point is that, such as it was, it was the proposal of the people ratified by the two plenipotentiaries.

From this hurried sketch of affairs at Canton during the first five years of the new intercourse we see that the secular policy of China had undergone no change as a result of the treaty. The settled determination of the Government to exclude foreigners from the country and keep them in strict subjection at the farthest maritime outpost of the empire had been overcome by violence; but the Chinese never abandoned the hope of retrieving their position in whole or in part, nor did they forego any opportunity of avenging their military defeat. A frontal attack being out of the question, the invader could be perpetually worried by guerilla tactics, his sentries caught napping, his chiefs bamboozled: what had been lost through force might thus be won back by force and fraud judiciously blended, for craft is the natural resource of the weak. The conditions of the contest have varied with the international developments of fifty years, but time has worked no change in the nature of the struggle East *v.* West.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEW TREATY PORTS—FOOCHOW, AMOY, NINGPO.

Visit of Chinese commissioners to Hongkong—A supplementary treaty negotiated—Chinese thereby obtain control of junk trade of colony—Vain efforts to recover the lost ground—New ports criticised—Amoy—Alcock's temporary residence there, 1844—Interpreter Parkes—Foochow—Bad beginning—Insolence of mandarin and mob—Lost ground recovered during Alcock's consulate—His family arrive—Little trade—Difficulties of diverting the Boheá trade from old routes—Alcock's commercial reports—Their grasp of salient points in a fresh range of subjects.

It accorded with the fitness of things that the negotiator of the treaty should remain to carry out its provisions. Sir Henry Pottinger was appointed the first Governor of Hongkong, Chief Superintendent of Trade, and Minister Plenipotentiary for Great Britain; Kiying and two associates Imperial Commissioners for China. Intercourse between them was of the most agreeable character. Though the wound to the pride of China was deep and still fresh, the Imperial Commissioners' acceptance of the new state of things exceeded what the most stoical philosophy could call for. They came in person, on invitation, to the alienated island, there to exchange the ratifications of the Nanking treaty; entered heartily into the life of the community, showed great interest in

their nascent institutions, and "returned to Canton charmed with English civilisation." China then was really converted, and Kiying the patron saint of the young colony! That adroit Manchu, however, had a purpose to serve by his effusive *bonhomie:* it was nothing less than to undermine the treaty of Nanking.

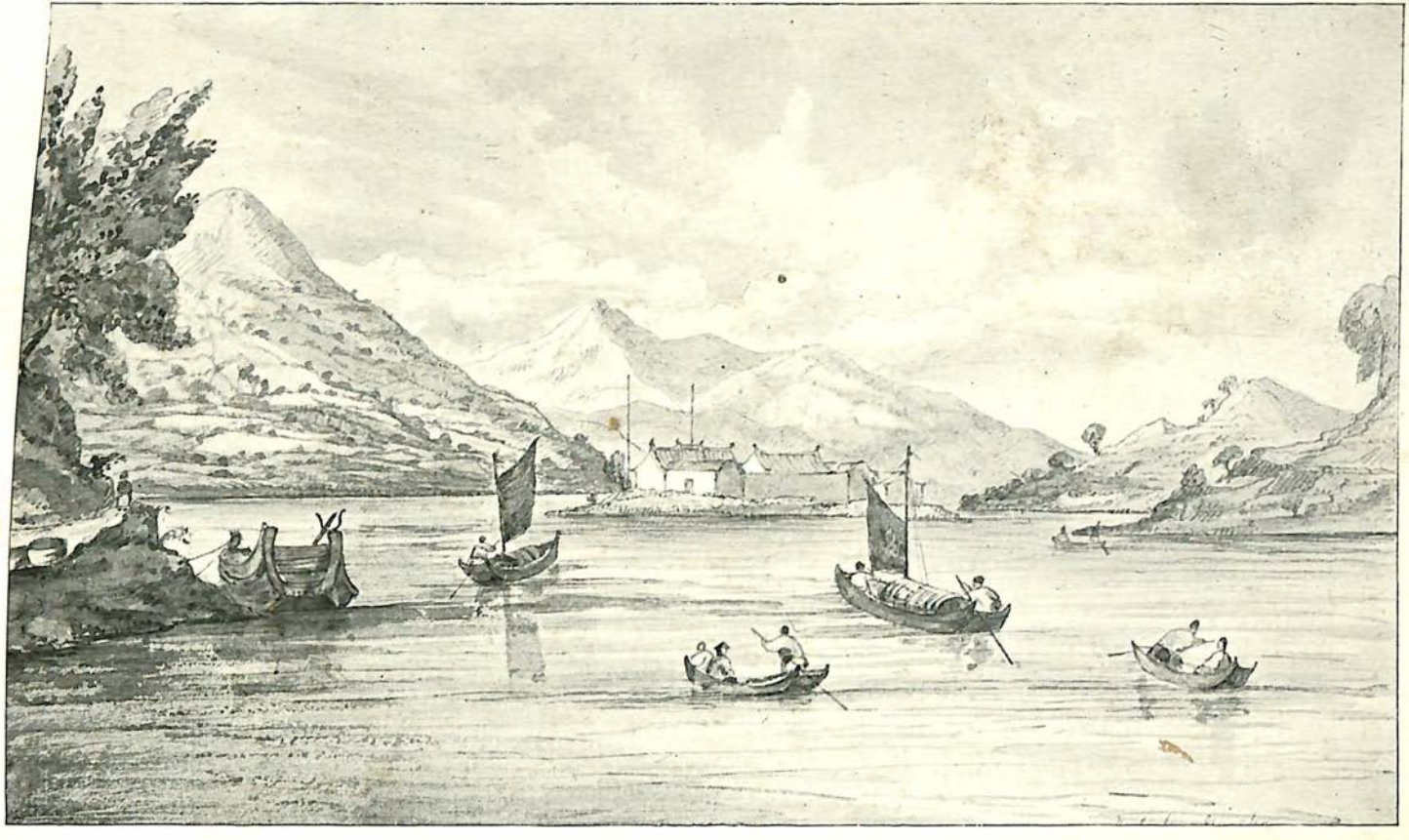
So long as Sir Henry Pottinger was negotiating under the guns of her Majesty's ships he was master of the situation, but when pitted against the Chinese in the open field the position was reversed, for they had definite aims and knew how to gain them. Arrangements were found necessary for the conduct of trade at the five consular ports; the relations between the colony of Hongkong and the empire of China, as regards criminals, debtors, &c., required definition; and, more important still, the native shipping frequenting its harbour had to be regulated. The negotiations required for these purposes afforded Kiying a favourable opportunity for giving effect to the reactionary policy of the Chinese Government. The supplementary treaty was negotiated at the Bogue between Sir Henry Pottinger and Kiying in October 1843. The Chinese version seems to have been signed by the British agent without his having before him a textual English translation: by its provisions the Chinese authorities engaged to protect the junk traffic in colonial waters. Sir Henry Pottinger did not realise the kind of weapon he had thus placed in the hands of his friends until its damaging effects were demonstrated by experience. Then what had been lost by diplomacy was sought to be partially regained by persuasion. To this end

strenuous efforts were made by successive governors of Hongkong to induce Kiying to forego some of the powers which had been inadvertently conferred on him, as their exercise was proving ruinous to the trade of the island. But as this result was precisely what had been intended by the Chinese, nothing short of another war would have moved them to yield a single point.

His hesitation to exercise the right of entry into the city of Canton conferred by the treaty of Nanking, while allowing the Chinese the full advantage of the concessions gained by them under the supplementary treaty, must likewise be held as a blemish on the policy of Sir Henry Pottinger. The best palliation of these errors of the first treaty-maker is perhaps to be found in the fact that his successors, with many years of actual experience to guide them, have fallen into the same errors of both omission and commission.

In other respects Sir Henry Pottinger's arrangements for giving effect to the treaty seem to have been as practical as the untried circumstances would allow.

The opening of the new ports, with the exception of Shanghai, was unfavourably commented upon by a section of the English press, not perhaps unwilling to score a point against the "Tory Government, which was alone answerable for the treaty of Nanking." They denounced the opening of so many ports on the ground that it would only multiply points of collision with the Chinese. Three years later the 'Times' pronounced "Amoy, Foochow, and Ningpo as good for nothing as places of trade," while Hong-



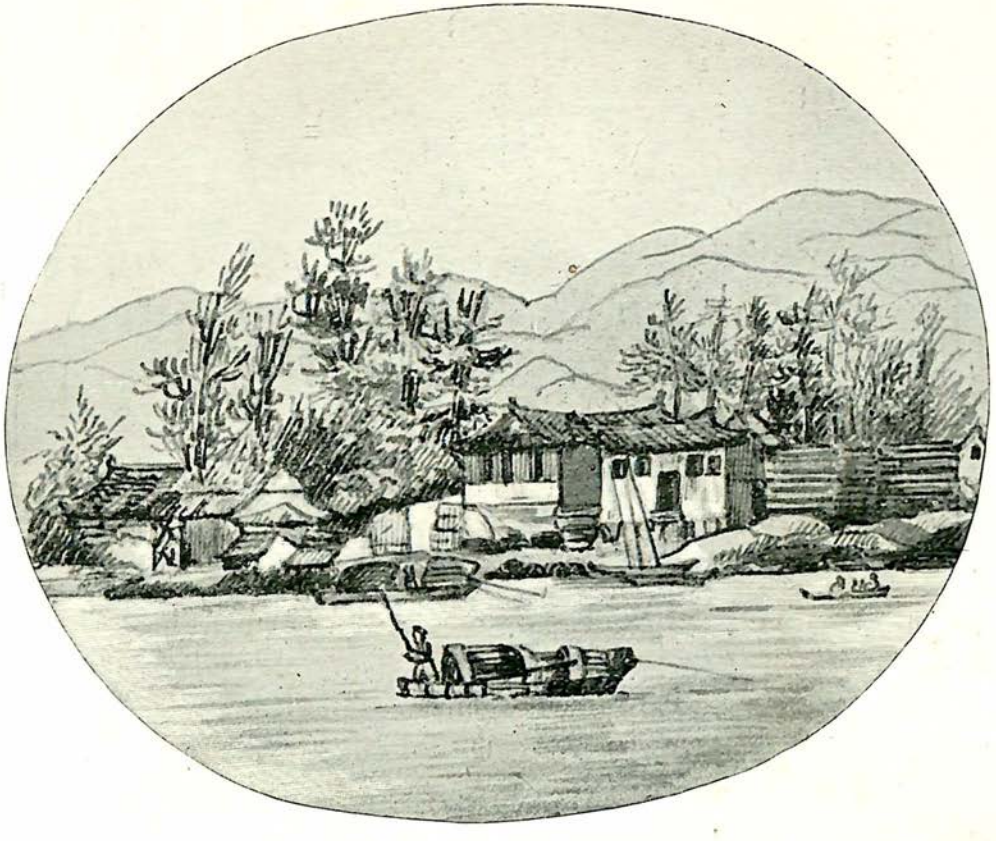
THE LAKES, NINGPO.

kong itself was equally despised as a commercial colony. Some of the journals resuscitated the idea which had been freely discussed during the years preceding the war, and advocated the acquisition in sovereignty of islands as emporia instead of ports on the mainland, and it is worthy of remark that the same idea was again revived by Mr Cobden twenty years later. "Get two other small islands," he said in 1864; "merely establish them as free ports" on the model of Hongkong. And this with a view to superseding the treaty ports on the coast, where trade had been established for twenty years.

Three of the new ports — Shanghai, Ningpo, and Amoy — were opened under Sir Henry Pottinger's auspices in 1843; Foochow in 1844. These places, distributed at approximately equal intervals along the coast-line of 1000 miles between Shanghai and Canton, were not chosen at random. They had all been at one time or another entrepots of foreign commerce with either Europe, Southern Asia, or Japan. Foochow had been many years before strongly recommended by one of the East India Company's tea-tasters as most desirable for the shipment of tea. An expedition equipped by the Company under Mr Hamilton Lindsay, who, like the other servants of the Company, was versed in the Chinese language, visited the northern coast in the chartered ship Amherst in 1832, and gained the first authentic information concerning the commercial capabilities of Shanghai. Mr Gutzlaff, who acted as secretary and coadjutor to Mr Lindsay's mission, made several adventurous voyages, including one in Chinese disguise, in a native junk, to Tientsin. Though the coast had not yet been surveyed, and

navigation was in consequence somewhat dangerous, a good deal of fairly accurate information, some of it already obsolete, was by these means placed at the disposal of those who made the selection of the treaty ports. Ningpo was noted for its literary culture, for the respectability and intelligence of its inhabitants, and their friendly disposition towards foreigners. But although it was the entrepot of a flourishing coasting trade, the shallowness of its river, the want of anchorage at its embouchure, and its vicinity to Shanghai, combined to preclude the growth of foreign commerce at the port of Ningpo.

It was to Foochow that Mr Alcock was appointed in 1844, by Mr Davis (as he then was), who had recently succeeded Sir Henry Pottinger. The new consul, however, made his actual *début* at Amoy, where he was detained for four months, from November 1844 to March 1845, acting for the titular consul at that port. There he at once displayed that energy and clear-sightedness which were to become so conspicuous in his subsequent career. Two important matters had to be arranged within the period named—the evacuation of the island of Kulangsu by the British garrison and the future residence of the consul. Trifling as this last may seem, it was a matter of no small consideration in China, where, to paraphrase Polonius, the dwelling oft proclaims the man. It was one of the innumerable devices of the Chinese authorities for degrading new-comers in the eyes of the populace to force them to live, as at Canton, within a confined space or in squalid tenements. Mr Alcock knew by instinct the importance of prestige, while his Penin-



THE FIRST CONSULAR RESIDENCE AT FOOCHOW.

sular training had taught him the value of sanitation. Following these two guiding stars, he overbore the obstruction of the officials, and not only obtained a commodious site but had a house built to his own specification during his temporary incumbency of the office. That, and his general bearing towards the authorities, stamped on the Amoy consulate the impress of dignity which has never been wholly effaced. He was most fortunate, it must be allowed, in his instruments, chiefly in the interpreter whom he found at Amoy, a man, or rather a boy—for he was only sixteen —entirely after his own heart. That was Harry Parkes, one of the bravest and best of our empire-builders. It is indeed to the journals and letters of Sir Harry Parkes, edited by Mr Stanley Lane-Poole, and to notes supplied for that biography by Sir Rutherford Alcock himself in 1893, that we are chiefly indebted for the record of their joint proceedings at Amoy, Foochow, and to some extent also Shanghai, from 1844 to 1848. The consul made a favourable first impression on the young interpreter, who described him in a family letter as "tall but slimly made, standing about six feet in his boots; . . . very gentlemanly in his manners and address, and exceedingly polite." It was not, however, till he reached his proper post, Foochow, that the mettle of the new consul and interpreter was seriously tested.

Foochow was of superior rank to the other two ports, being, like Canton, at once a provincial capital and the seat of a governor-general or viceroy of two provinces —namely, Fukien and Chêkiang — and possessing a Manchu garrison. The Chinese Government was believed to have been most reluctant to open Foochow

as a trading port at all, which seemed reason enough for the British negotiators insisting on its being opened. Its trade was small, which perhaps rendered the port the more suitable for the experimental purpose of testing the principles which were to govern the new intercourse.

As the leading occurrences there have been set forth at some length by Mr Stanley Lane-Poole in the above-mentioned work, there is the less reason for us to linger over details. We find that on arrival at the end of March 1845 Mr Alcock discovered that he had not to maintain, but to regain, the prestige which had already been lost at Foochow. Canton was, in fact, repeating itself both as regards the arrogance of the Chinese and the acquiescence of British officials. Exclusion from the city and various other indignities had been imposed on the consul, who, on his part, had followed the course which had proved so fatal at Canton of currying favour by submission. Living in a shed,[1] where Mr Davis on a flying visit was ashamed to receive return calls from the native authorities, keeping up no great state, afraid even to hoist his consular flag for fear of hurting the feelings of the Chinese, the consul soon brought upon himself and his nationals the inevitable consequences of his humility. Mob violence and outrages, encouraged at first by the authorities in order to cow the foreigners, had attained dimensions which at last alarmed the

[1] "Mr Lay, who has been officiating as consul for some weeks, has been located in a miserable house built on piles on a mud flat, apart from the city, and above the bridge, where the tide, as it ebbs and flows, daily sweeps up to his door; and all efforts to obtain even decent accommodation in the city, where he is entitled to demand it, or in any but this pestilent locality, have been in vain."—'Times' Correspondent, Hongkong, October 22, 1844.

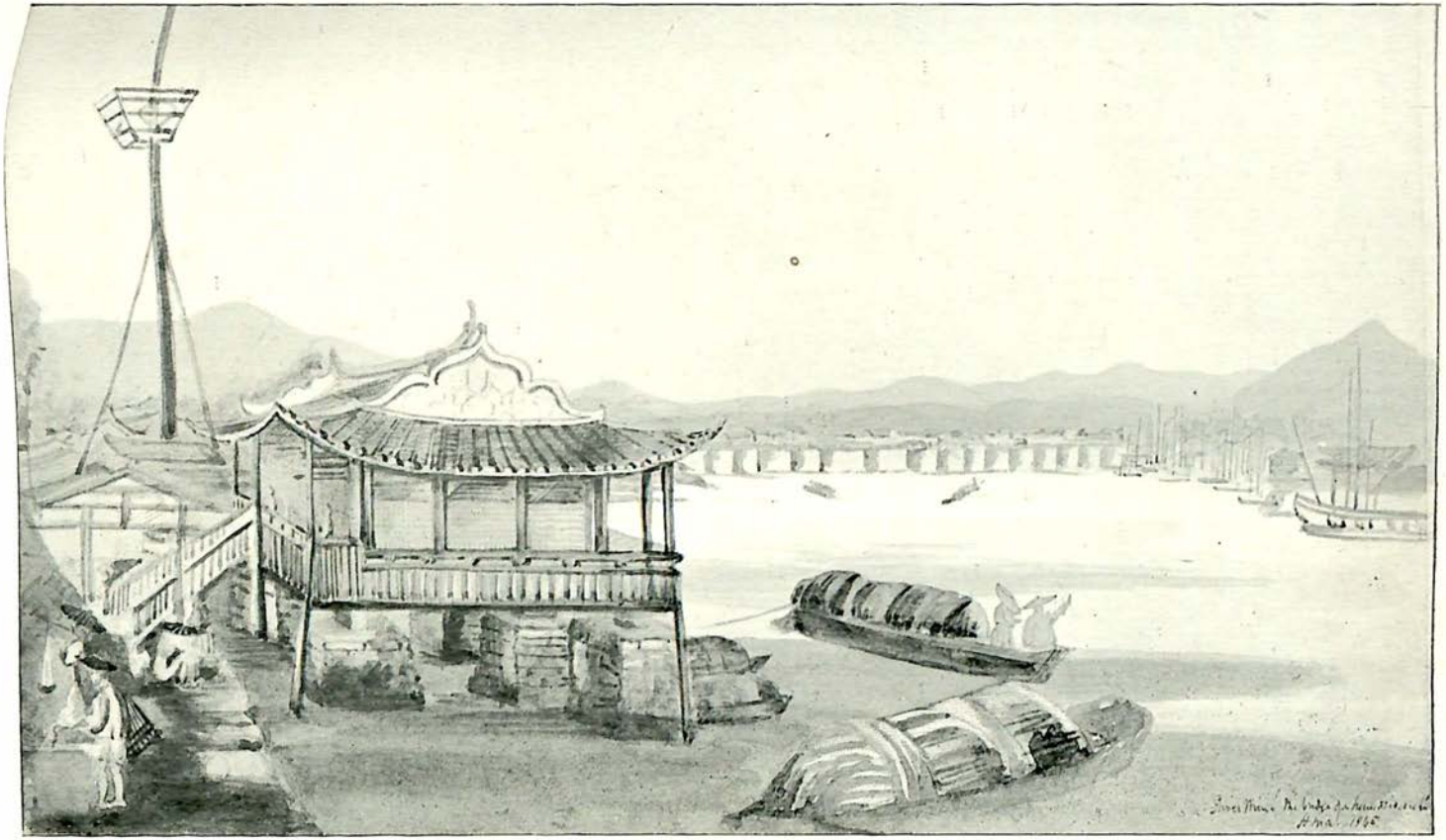
authorities themselves, all within two years of the opening of the port. Mr Alcock set himself sternly to oppose this downward current, but a year elapsed before the violence of the people and the studied rudeness of the officials were finally stamped out. For, curiously enough, as Mr Lane-Poole has so well pointed out, every outrage in Canton found its echo at Foochow, showing clearly where lay the "centre of disturbance," as our meteorologists express it.

In the end, however, the ascendancy of the British authority was completely achieved. The consul and the interpreter between them succeeded in getting proud Tartars put in the common pillory and lesser ruffians severely flogged, while before they left Foochow in 1846 they had extorted from the authorities substantial pecuniary compensation for injuries sustained by British subjects. The credit of these vigorous measures no doubt belonged in the first instance to Sir John Davis, the chief superintendent, who had been so struck with the deplorable condition of things on his first official visit to the port in 1844 that he empowered the new consul to find the remedy. The effect of this resolute policy on the mandarins was as prompt and natural as the effect of the submissive policy had been, and it is instructive to read the testimony of Sir John Davis that, after redress had been exacted, "the consul was on the best terms with the local authorities," which is the perpetual lesson taught in all our dealings with the Chinese.

Foochow is distinguished among the coast ports of China by the beauty and even grandeur of its scenery and the comparative salubrity of its climate. The city itself contains above half a million of people, covers an

extensive area on the left bank of the river Min, and is connected with the foreign quarter by a stone bridge of forty-five "arches," which are not arches but spaces between the piers on which huge granite slabs are laid horizontally, forming the roadway. The houses and business premises of the merchants, the custom-house and foreign consulates, are all now situated on Nantai, an island of some twenty miles in circumference, which divides the main stream of the Min from its tributary, the Yungfu. In the early days the British consulate was located within the walled city, in the grounds of a Buddhist temple, three miles from the landing-place and business quarter on Nantai, and approached through narrow and exceedingly foul-smelling streets.

Mrs Alcock joined her husband as soon as tolerable accommodation could be prepared for her, and being the first foreign lady who had set foot in the city, her entry excited no small curiosity among the people. A year later Mrs and Miss Bacon, Mrs Alcock's mother and sister, were added to the family party, and though curiosity was still keen, they were safely escorted through the surging crowd to their peaceful *enclave* in the heart of the city. The situation was suggestive of monastic life. Being on high ground the consulate commanded a superb mountain view, with the two rivers issuing from their recesses and the great city lying below forming a picturesque foreground, while in the middle distance the terraced rice-fields showed in their season the tenderest of all greens. The circumstances were conducive to the idyllic life of which we get a glimpse in the biography of Sir Harry Parkes, who shared it. He speaks in the warmest terms of the kindness he received from Mr and Mrs Alcock, who



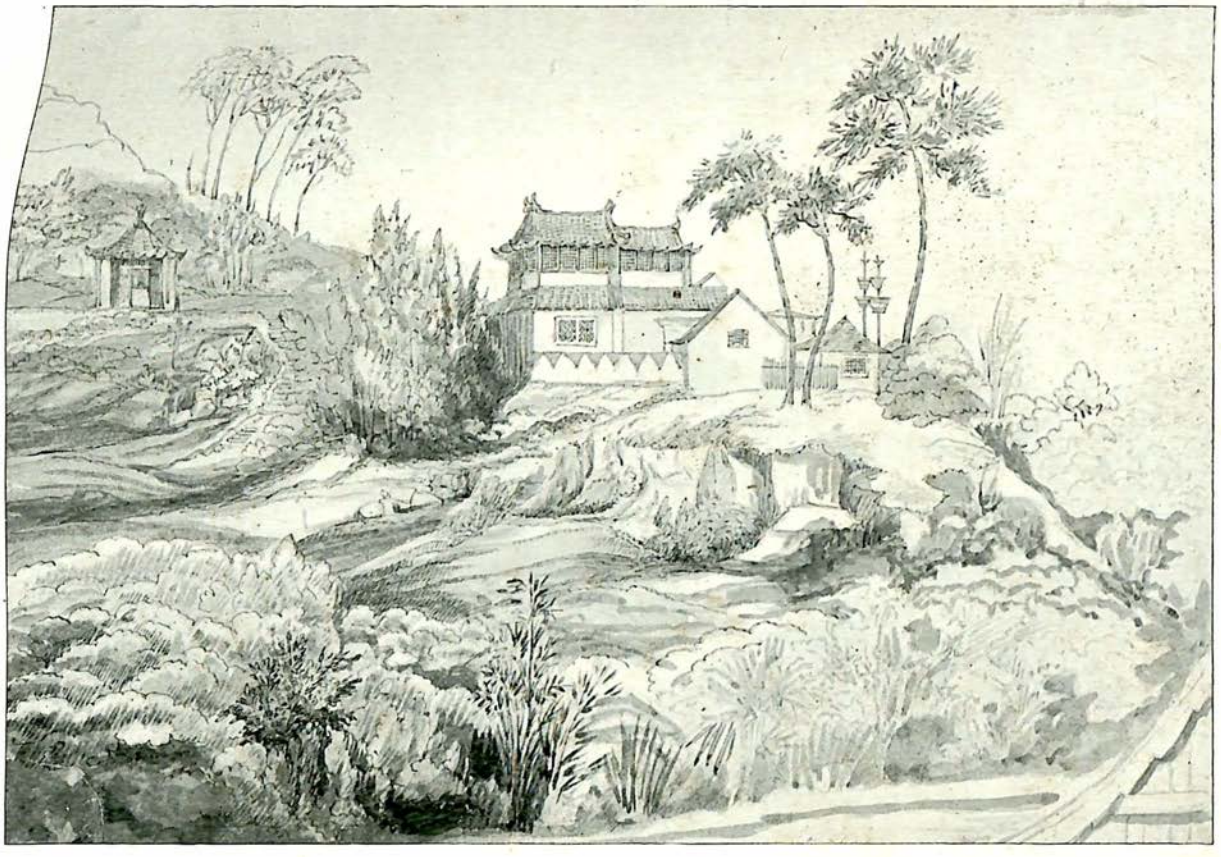
BRIDGE OVER RIVER MIN.

tended him through a fever which, but for the medical skill of the consul — no other professional aid being available—must have ended fatally. They helped him with books, enlarged his field of culture, and there is no doubt that daily intercourse with this genial and accomplished family did much to supply the want of that liberal education from which the boy had been untimely cut adrift. The value of such parental influence to a lad who had left school at thirteen can hardly be over-estimated, and he did not exaggerate in writing, "I can never repay the Alcocks the lasting obligations I am under to them."

During the first few years there was practically no foreign trade at Foochow except in opium, which was conducted from a sea base beyond port limits, a trade which was invisible alike to Chinese and British authorities in the sense in which harlequin is invisible to clown and pantaloon. The spasmodic attempts which were made to open up a market for British manufactures met with no encouragement, for only one British merchant maintained a precarious existence, and the question of abandoning the port was mooted. The prospect of commercial development at Foochow depended on its vicinity to that classic centre of the tea cultivation, the famous Bohea range, about 250 miles to the westward, whose name, however, was used to cover many inferior products. Ten years more elapsed before this advantageous position was turned to practical account, owing to the serious obstacles that stood in the way of changing the established trade route to Canton and the absence of aggressive energy sufficient to overcome them. Through the enterprise of an Amer-

ican merchant in alliance with Chinese, Foochow began to be a shipping port for tea about the year 1853, growing year by year in importance until it rivalled Canton and Shanghai. But as its prosperity has always rested on the single article, the fortunes of the port have necessarily fallen with the general decay of the Chinese tea trade.

Apart from the task of putting the official intercourse on a good working basis, of maintaining order between the few foreigners, residents, and visitors, and the native population, the consular duties at a port like Foochow were necessarily of the lightest description. But it was not in Mr Alcock's nature to make a sinecure of his office. He was a stranger to the country, about which he had everything to learn. He was surrounded by problems all of great interest, and some of them pressing urgently for solution, and he had to make a success of his port or "know the reason why." Among the fruits of his labours during the latter part of his term at Foochow are a series of commercial reports, partly published by Government, which bear witness to exhaustive research into every circumstance having any bearing on the genesis of trade, and applying to those local, and to him absolutely novel, conditions the great root principles which are of universal validity. Considering how alien to his previous experience was the whole range of such subjects, his at once grappling with them and firmly seizing their salient features showed a mind of no common capacity. For there was nothing perfunctory about those early treatises; on the contrary, they were at once more polished and more profound than most things of the same



THE SECOND CONSULAR RESIDENCE AT FOOCHOW, 1848.

kind which have appeared during the subsequent half century. The principal generalisations of recent commentators on the trade of China were in fact set forth in the three Foochow consular reports of 1845-46, while many supposed new lights which the discussions of the last few years have shed on Chinese character and methods had been already displayed, and in a more perfect form, in the buried records of the superintendency of trade in China.

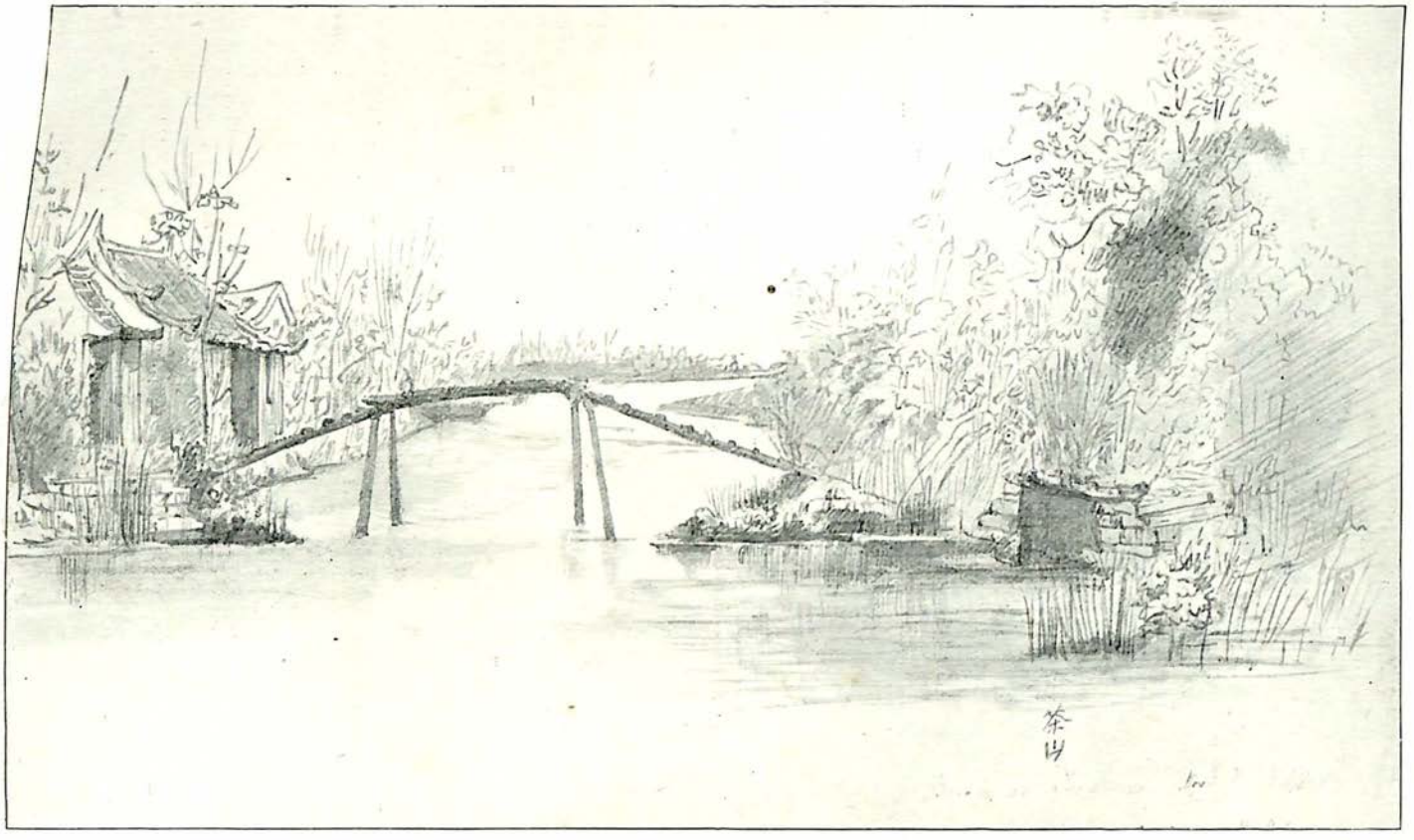
LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

CHAPTER IX.

SHANGHAI.

Shanghai—Importance of its situation—Consul Balfour—Germ of municipal institutions—The foreign settlements—Confidence and civility of the natives—Alcock appointed consul, 1846—Excursions into the country—Their limitations—Responsibilities of consuls.

Of the four new ports, Shanghai, by far the most important, had been fortunate in the selection of its first consul. This was Captain George Balfour of the Madras Artillery, who, like a wise master-builder, laid the foundations of what is now one of the greatest emporia in the world. Captain Balfour had managed the beginnings of the settlement so judiciously that the merchants enjoyed the fullest facilities for prosecuting their business, while the consul maintained good relations with the native authorities and no hostile feeling existed between the foreign and native communities. The circumstances of the place were favourable to all this: the foreign residents were not, as at Canton, confined to a narrow space; they had abundance of elbow-room and perfect freedom of movement in the surrounding district, which was well provided with footpaths and an excellent system of waterways. The people of that part of the country are of a peaceable and rather timid disposition. Altogether, a healthy condition of things



BAMBOO BRIDGE AT FOOCHOW.

had grown up, there seemed to be no grievance felt on either side, while the material prosperity of the natives rapidly increased as a result of a great and expanding foreign trade, to which they had never been accustomed. The regulation of business accommodation and residence was very simple and worked automatically. A certain area, ample for every purpose that could be foreseen, was set apart by the Chinese Government for the residence of foreigners, the location having been indicated by Sir Henry Pottinger on his way from Nanking after the signing of the treaty. The rights of the native proprietors were in no way interfered with, the merchants and others who desired to settle were at liberty to deal with the natives for the purchase of building lots, and as the prices paid were so much above the normal value of the land there was no essential difficulty in effecting purchases. But there being so many interested parties, several years elapsed before the whole area had passed into the possession of foreign occupants. The land remained the property of the Crown, held under perpetual lease, subject only to a small ground-rent, which was collected through the consulates, as at this day. Roads were gradually marked out and jetties for boats were built on the river frontage, and what is now a municipal council served by a large secretarial staff and an imposing body of police, and handling a budget amounting to £130,000, came into existence under the modest title of a "Committee for Roads and Jetties." In the beginning there seems to have been an idea of forming separate reservations of land for the subjects of the three treaty Powers—Great Britain, France, and the United States; but the exigencies of

business soon effaced the theoretical distinction as between England and America, whose separate ideal settlements were merged for all practical purposes into one cosmopolitan colony, in which the Powers coming later on the scene enjoyed the same rights as the original pioneers.

To ground thus wisely prepared Mr Alcock succeeded in the autumn of 1846. His four months at Amoy and eighteen at Foochow were only preparatory for the real work which lay before him in the consulate at Shanghai, whither he carried in his train the interpreter Parkes, with whom he had grown accustomed to work so efficiently. Shanghai by this time was already realising the position assigned to it by nature as a great commercial port, and the resident community, 120 Europeans all told, was already forming itself into that novel kind of republic which is so flourishing to-day, while its commercial interests were such as to give its members weight in the administration of their own affairs as well as in matters of public policy.

The level country round Shanghai was, as we have said, very favourable for excursions by land and water, affording tourists and sportsmen congenial recreation. The district was in those days remarkably well stocked with game. Pheasants of the "ring-necked" variety, now so predominant in English preserves, abounded close up to the city wall, and were sometimes found in the gardens of the foreign residents. Snipe, quail, and wildfowl were plentiful in their season, the last named in great variety. All classes of the foreign community took advantage of the freedom of locomotion which they enjoyed. Newly arrived missionaries, no less than newly arrived sports-

COUNTRY WATERWAY NEAR SHANGHAI.

men, were encouraged by the ease and safety with which they could prosecute their vocation in the towns and villages accessible from Shanghai. Within the radius authorised by treaty the foreigners soon became familiar objects in a district which is reckoned to support a population as dense as that of Belgium. Not only did friendly relations exist, but a wonderful degree of confidence was established between the natives and foreign tourists. It was not the custom in those days for foreigners to carry money, the only coinage available being of a clumsy and non-portable character. They paid their way by "chits" or orders upon their comprador, and it was not uncommon for them in those early days to pay for supplies during their excursions into the interior by a few hieroglyphics pencilled on a scrap of paper, which the confiding peasant accepted in perfect good faith, and with so little apprehension that sometimes a considerable interval would elapse before presentation of these primitive cheques — until, perhaps, the holder had occasion to make a journey to Shanghai.

But although the foreigner in his proper costume moved freely within the prescribed area, it was considered hazardous to venture beyond these limits. It was also, of course, a nominal contravention of the treaty, for the consequences of which the traveller must take the whole risk. Those, therefore—and they were exceedingly few — who could not repress the desire to penetrate into the interior adopted as a disguise the costume of the natives. It was thus that Fortune made his explorations into the tea districts of China. The notion that either difficulty or danger attended these distant excursions gradually disap-

peared, and about the year 1855 sportsmen and travellers began to explore the forbidden country without any disguise at all, to the great amusement of the populace, and to the profit of the priests of the temples where they found accommodation.

The consular authorities occupied a peculiar and highly responsible position in China. Their nationals being exempt from native jurisdiction, and subject only to the laws of their own country, promulgated, interpreted, and, when occasion arose, executed, by the consul, that functionary was morally answerable to the people and the Government of China for the good behaviour of his countrymen. On the other hand, it was his primary duty to defend them against all aggression of the Chinese. Between these two opposite duties the consul needed all the discretion, courage, and good judgment that he could command; and it was but natural that individual temperament or the pressure of local circumstances should cause diversity in the mode in which the consuls interpreted their instructions and balanced the different claims of their public duty. As has been said before, Captain Balfour had shown himself most judicious in all his arrangements for the protection and advancement of his countrymen in Shanghai. Foreseeing, notwithstanding the peaceable disposition of the natives, that risks might attend unfettered intercourse with the interior, he had thought it prudent to restrict the rambles of British subjects to the limits of a twenty-four hours' journey from Shanghai,—a limit which coincided with curious exactness with the "thirty-mile radius" of defence against the rebels which was laid down by Admiral Hope eighteen years later.

I. THE TSINGPU AFFAIR.

Attack on three missionaries—Redress extorted by Consul Alcock—Its lasting effect.

Affairs in Shanghai had followed a placid and uneventful course until an incident occurred which brought into sudden activity the latent forces of disorder. Within little more than a year after the arrival of Mr Alcock at his new post an outrage was perpetrated on the persons of three English missionaries, which led to the first and the last important struggle between the British and Chinese authorities in Shanghai. The assailants of Messrs Medhurst, Lockhart, and Muirhead, the three missionaries concerned, were not the peaceably disposed natives of the place, but the discharged crews of the Government grain-junks, who had been cast adrift by the officials and left to shift for themselves after the manner of disbanded soldiers. The attack took place at a small walled town called Tsingpu, within the authorised radius, and the three Englishmen came very near losing their lives. Mr Alcock lost not a moment in demanding full redress from the Chinese authorities, who instinctively sheltered themselves under the old evasive pleas which had proved so effective at Canton. It happened that the highest local official, the Taotai, had had experience of the southern port, and, entirely unaware that he was confronted in Shanghai with a man of very different calibre from any he had encountered before, he brought out all the rusty weapons of the Canton armoury, in sure and certain hope of reducing

the consul's demands to nullity. Evasion being exhausted, intimidation was tried, and the consul and his interpreter were threatened with the vengeance of an outraged people, quite in the Canton manner. But intimidation was the very worst tactics to try on two Englishmen of the stamp of Alcock and Parkes, and when that card had been played the Chinese game was up.

The situation was one of those critical ones that test moral stamina, that discriminate crucially between a man and a copying-machine. It was also one which illuminated, as by an electric flash, the pivotal point of all our relations with China then as now, for the principle never grows old. It is therefore important to set forth the part played by the responsible officer, the support he obtained, the risks he ran, and the effective results of his action. An absolutely unprovoked murderous outrage had been perpetrated on three Englishmen; the Chinese authorities refused redress with insolence and evasion; acquiescence in the denial of justice would have been as fatal to future good relations at Shanghai as it had been in the previous decade in Canton. What was the official charged with the protection of his countrymen to do? He had no instructions except to conciliate the Chinese; there was no telegraph to England; communication even with the chief superintendent of trade at Hongkong, 850 miles off, was dependent on chance sailing vessels. Delay was equivalent to surrender. Now or never was the peremptory alternative presented to the consul, who, taking his official life in his hands, had to decide and act on his own personal responsibility. Had time allowed of an

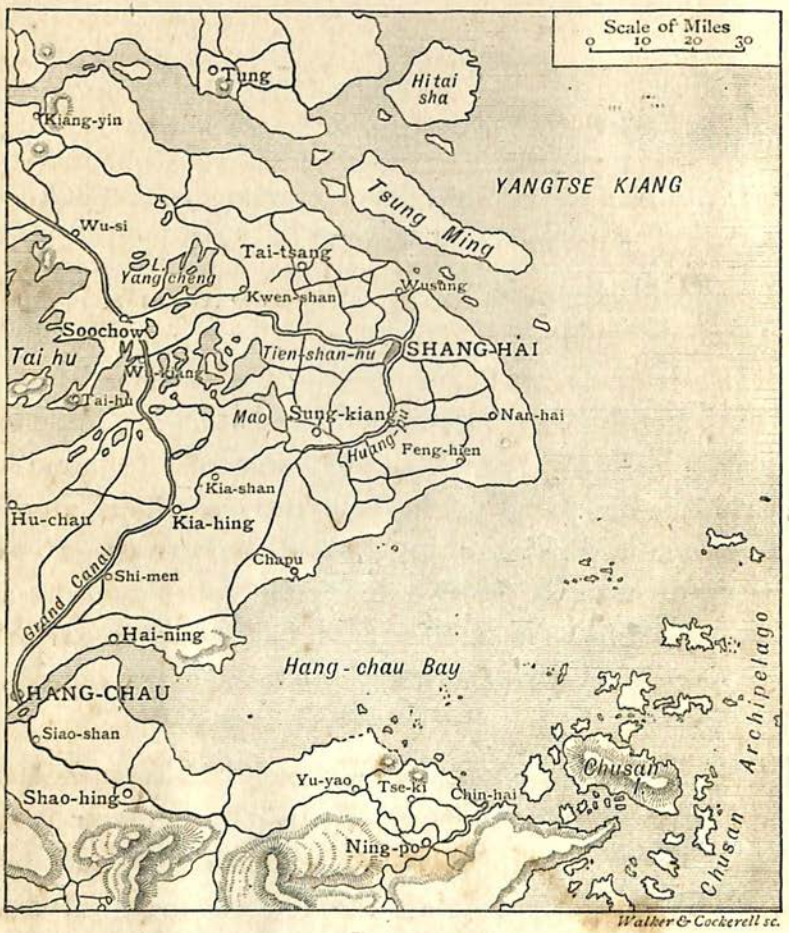
exchange of views with the plenipotentiary in Hong-kong, we know for certain that nothing would have been done, for the first announcement of Mr Alcock's strong measures filled Mr Bonham (who had just succeeded Sir John Davis) with genuine alarm.

> Considering the instructions [he wrote] with which you have been furnished from the Foreign Office, dated December 18, 1846, and the limited power and duties of a consul, I cannot but express my regret that you should have taken the steps you have seen fit to do without previous reference to her Majesty's plenipotentiary, as undoubtedly, under the peremptory orders recently received from her Majesty's Government, I should not have considered myself warranted in sanctioning, &c., &c.

Fortunately for the consul and for the peaceful development of British trade, one of Palmerston's specific instructions had been obeyed in Shanghai. There was a British ship of war in port, the 10-gun brig Childers, and, what was of still more importance, a real British *man* on board of her, Commander Pitman, who shared to the full the Consul's responsibility for what was done.

The measures adopted by Consul Alcock — when negotiation was exhausted—were to announce to the Chinese authorities that, until satisfaction had been obtained, no duties should be paid on cargo imported or exported in British ships: furthermore, that the great junk fleet of 1400 sail, laden and ready for sea with the tribute rice for Peking, should not be allowed to leave the port. The Childers, moored in the stream below the junk anchorage, was in a position to make this a most effective blockade. The rage of the Taotai rose to fever heat, and it was then he threatened, and

no doubt attempted to inflame the populace and the whole vagabond class. The Taotai ordered some of the rice-laden junks to proceed; but though there were fifty war-junks to guard them, the masters dared not



MOUTH OF YANGTZE AND CHUSAN ARCHIPELAGO.

attempt to pass the ideal barrier thrown across the river by the resolute Captain Pitman.

The outrage took place on the 8th of March. On the 13th the consul presented an ultimatum to the Taotai giving him forty-eight hours to produce the

criminals. This being disregarded, the measures above referred to were enforced, with the full approval, it may be mentioned, of the consuls of the two other treaty Powers. At the same time Vice-Consul Robertson, with Parkes for interpreter, was despatched to Nanking on board her Majesty's ship Espiègle to lay the whole case before the viceroy of Kiangnan. The matter was there promptly attended to, full redress was ordered, and the culprits punished exactly three weeks after the assault. The embargo on the rice-junks was removed, and affairs resumed their normal course.[1] The effect of this lesson has never been effaced, harmony having prevailed between British and Chinese officials and people in Shanghai and the province from that day to this.

The circumstances were of course very unusual which placed such ready means of bloodless coercion in the hands of the British consul. The fortuitous coincidence of the time of the outrage with the period of departure of the grain fleet placed a weapon in the consul's hands which of itself would have eventually brought the Chinese to terms, should the matter in the mean time not have been taken out of the hands of the consul and dealt with from Hongkong by the plenipotentiary, whose views have been given above. So soon as the detention of the grain fleet became known to the Government of Peking, orders of a very drastic nature would undoubtedly have been despatched to the viceroy of the province, and both he and his subordinate would have been made answerable for their incompetence in imperilling

[1] See this whole transaction described in his characteristic manner by De Quincey in his brochure on China, originally published in Titan, 1857.

the supply of rice for the Government. But the pressure was doubly intensified by the appearance of a foreign ship of war under the walls of Nanking. Six years had not elapsed since a similar demonstration had brought the Government to its knees, and to have allowed such an invasion a second time would have drawn down the imperial wrath on the luckless provincial authorities. For Nanking differs from the other provincial capitals, such as Canton and Foochow, inasmuch as it is near the strategic centre of the empire, commanding the main artery of communication with the interior of the country, at the point of intersection of the Yangtze river by the famous Imperial Canal which connects the capital with the richest region in the Yangtze valley. A blockade of the sea-going grain fleet with a simultaneous blockade of these inland waters, so easily effected, would have throttled China. The viceroy, who sent a report on the transaction to the throne by special express, explained away his own hasty action by saying "that the appearance of the barbarian chiefs at the provincial city may have caused anxiety in the sacred breast."

The verdict of the Home Government on the episode was substantially the same as that on Sir John Davis's brilliant expedition on the Canton river the year before: "Gratified with your success, but don't do it again;" in other words, "Do it at your peril, leaving us to applaud or repudiate according to the event." Perhaps it would be more just to say that there were then, as always, conflicting views in the British Cabinet, the apparent vacillations of the Government depending a good deal on which of its

members happened, for the moment, to have the parole,—whether the Foreign Secretary, the Colonial Secretary, or other Minister indited the despatch.

Commenting some years later on the general question of our relations with China, Mr Alcock wrote as follows: "A salutary dread of the immediate consequences of violence offered to British subjects, certainty of its creating greater trouble and danger to the native authorities personally than even the most vigorous efforts to protect the foreigners and seize their assailants will entail, seems to be the best and only protection in this country for Englishmen." Palmerston himself could not have laid down the law and common-sense of the case with greater precision.

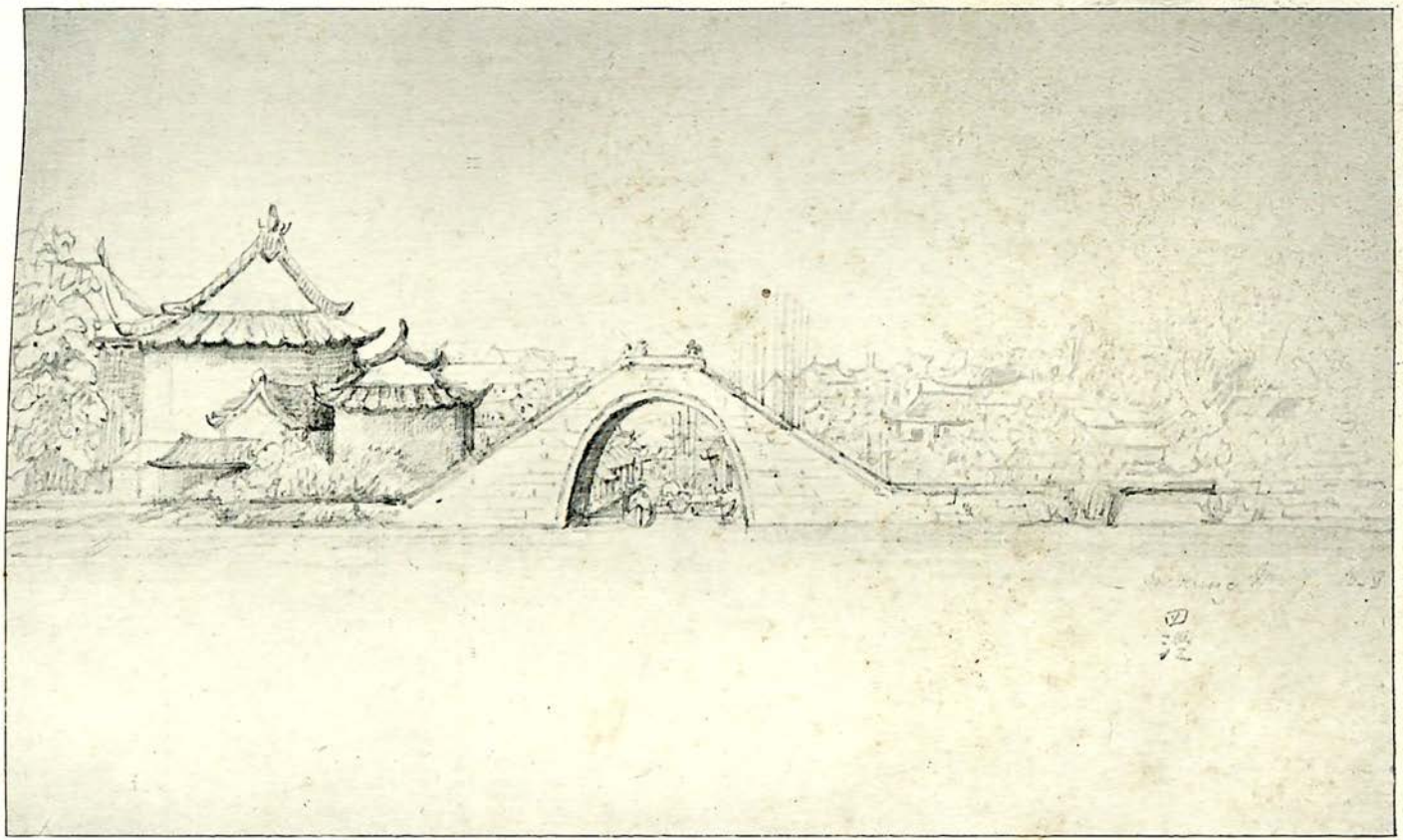
II. REBELLION.

Taiping rebellion—Rebel occupation of Shanghai—Encroachment of investing force on foreign settlement—Driven off by Anglo-American forces—The French quarrel with insurgents—Consequent enlargement of French concession—The assumption of self-government by the Anglo-American community—Exemplary conduct of Chinese authorities after their defeat—French belligerency—Difficult question of neutrality—Treatment of native refugees.

Affairs went smoothly and prosperously in Shanghai for another five years, when the greatest calamity that has visited China in modern times cast its shadow on the province and on the city. The appalling ravages of the Taiping rebellion, which, originating in the southern province of Kwangsi, followed the great trade-routes to the Yangtze-kiang and down the course of that stream, leaving absolute desolation in its wake, reached the southern capital,

Nanking, on March 8, 1853. The city was paralysed, and surrendered on the 19th, apparently without a struggle; the whole Tartar garrison, numbering 20,000, were put ruthlessly to the sword, not a soul being spared. The whole country, officials and people alike, was thrown into a state of abject fear. The ease with which such Government forces as there were succumbed to the onslaught of the rebel hordes may very well have prompted the rowdy element, which exists more or less everywhere, to make raids on their own account. Such a band, belonging as was supposed to certain secret societies, but without any connection with the main body of the Taipings, who were at the time applying fire and sword to the populous towns on the Yangtze, surprised and captured the walled city of Shanghai. "The news," says an eye-witness, "came like thunder from a clear sky;" there was no thought of the city being in danger either from within or without. The people were panic-stricken at first, but fear with them seemed near akin to criminality, and the scene enacted was what was repeated thousands of times and over a wide area—one of general pillage and destruction. "Several hundred of the usually innocent and simple country-folk—who must have scented their prey as the eagle does the carcass, for as yet it was early morning—fell upon the custom-house, whence they carried off chairs, tables, windows, doors, everything that was portable, leaving the floor littered with books and papers, which were being kicked about and trodden on in a most unceremonious way."

For a period of eighteen months, beginning in September 1853 and ending in February 1855, these rebels



ENTRANCE TO SZE-KING, NEAR SHANGHAI.

held possession of the city. It took a little time before the authorities were able to gather any force to expel them. But they did commence a species of siege which ultimately succeeded in its object. There would be no interest in tracing its progress. What we have to note is the effect which the interregnum produced on the relations between the foreign officials and community and the Chinese.

The first was of a very remarkable character, being nothing less than an armed collision between such foreign forces as could be mustered and the imperialist troops who were investing the city. The Chinese soldiers were in camp at a short distance outside of the foreign settlement, which was exempt from the operations of the war. But the discipline of Chinese troops is never very efficient, and unruly stragglers from the camps kept the foreigners in the settlement in constant hot water. It became, in fact, dangerous for them to take their recreation in the open ground at the back of the settlement, which was used as a racecourse. Immunity from reprisals produced its invariable result, and the aggressions of the soldiery became more persistent and better organised. The foreigners were at last driven to retaliate in their own defence. After a formidable inroad of the Chinese troops, the three treaty consuls met hastily and decided on sending a demand to the Chinese general for the withdrawal of all his soldiers from the vicinity of the settlement, failing which, his position would be attacked at four o'clock the same afternoon by all the available foreign forces. These were, marines and bluejackets from her Britannic Majesty's ships Encounter

and Grecian, marines and sailors from the United States ship Plymouth, some sailors from the merchant ships in port, and about 200 of the residents as infantry volunteers. The English force was commanded by Captain O'Callaghan, who was accompanied by Consul Alcock; the Americans were led by Captain Kelley, who was accompanied by Consul Murphy; while the volunteers were commanded by Vice-Consul Wade, subsequently her Majesty's Minister to China. The attack on the Chinese position was completely successful; indeed there was apparently very little resistance, a circumstance which was attributed by Mr Wetmore, who was in the action from beginning to end, to the uncovenanted co-operation of the rebels within the city. It was, nevertheless, according to him, writing nearly forty years after, "a hazardous, if not a reckless, undertaking."

Her Majesty's Government, in a despatch from the Foreign Office dated June 16, "entirely approved of Mr Alcock's proceedings, and they considered that he displayed great courage and judgment in circumstances of no ordinary difficulty"; while the British community unanimously conveyed their warmest thanks to Consul Alcock, Vice-Consul Wade, and the naval officers concerned, for "saving their lives and property from the most imminent jeopardy." And they add that "any symptoms of hesitation and timid policy would inevitably have led to serious consequences and far greater loss of life."

It is to be remarked that the French took no part in this common defence of the settlement, in explanation of which it must be noted that they had never fallen kindly into the cosmopolitan system,

but as years went on kept themselves more and more apart, expanding what was a mere consular residence until it covered two populous suburbs embracing half of the circuit of the walled city, and what began as a settlement came to be spoken of as a "concession."

In this situation it was not difficult for them to pick a quarrel on their own account with the rebels, which led to an ineffectual bombardment of the city by French ships of war moored close under the walls. Guns were then landed in the suburb, which was thereafter embraced within the limits of the French concession, the houses being demolished to give play to the artillery. A cannonade lasting many days resulted in a practical breach in the city wall, which was followed up by a combined assault by the French and the imperialist troops, with whom they had allied themselves. The attack was repulsed with severe loss to the assailants.

Among the results of these operations and of the lapse of organised government during eighteen months the most direct was perhaps the establishment of the French on the ground where their batteries had been placed. For reasons military or otherwise, a *tabula rasa* was made of an immense populous suburb, the ground then admitting of easy occupation and the laying out of streets and roads. The area thus occupied by the French is separated from the cosmopolitan settlement of Shanghai by a tidal creek.

Results less showy, but more important in the interests of humanity and international commerce, were very soon apparent in the cosmopolitan settlement. The first of these was the assumption by the foreign

community of the function of self-government and self-protection, and the foundation of that important municipality, which has established as fine a record of public service as any such body has ever done. The inroads of vagabondage and crime would, without the protective measures extemporised for the occasion, have swamped the foreign quarter and reduced it to the desolate condition of the native city. And this necessity of relying on their own strength has no doubt given to the community of Shanghai that tone of self-confidence which has characterised successive generations of them.

The effect of the collision on the relations between the foreign and Chinese authorities can hardly be understood without some explanatory words. In countries where the soldier, sudden and quick in quarrel, seeks the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth, there is a psychological figment called military honour, which may be symbolised in various ways, as, for example, by a rag at the end of a stick for which brave men will cheerfully die. The warlike traditions which have evolved European codes of honour have no existence in China. *Revanche*, therefore, did not enter into the heads of the defeated Chinese commanders, who contented themselves with posting placards about their camps stating that "the barbarians were about to be annihilated, but that they had ransomed themselves for 300,000 taels, and that an additional 300,000 would be required." Their conduct, however, was quite exemplary during the remainder of the siege, their chief solicitude being to avoid encroaching on the foreign quarter. Whatever be the explanation, the fact is that the Chinese were on better terms with the foreign

officials after than they had been before the battle of "Muddy Flat," fought on the 4th of April 1854. Within ten days they were amicably settling in concert the ground for a new camp, which would not hamper the military operations of the besiegers nor yet compromise the sanctity of the foreign settlement.

Thus there was no obstacle whatever in the way of concerting with the nearest representatives of the Government of China all those measures which were demanded by the position of neutrality assumed by the British Government between the insurgents and imperialist forces, and also for the regulation and control of the Chinese refugees, who poured into the foreign settlement to escape the rapine of savage war. The neutrality of the British representative was difficult to maintain: by force of circumstances it took a benevolent form towards the beleaguered rebels, who were dependent for their continued existence upon supplies received from and through the foreign settlement. The situation was complicated by the action of the French, who, having quarrelled with the insurgents, entered on the stage as a third belligerent. Thereupon the French authorities made a grievance of "the scandal of supplies being furnished to the declared enemies of the French in the sight and under the protection of our English guard," France being at the time allied with Great Britain in prosecuting the war in the Crimea. Consul Alcock, whose sense of propriety had already been considerably shocked by the facilities which the position of the cosmopolitan settlement afforded for conveying supplies into the city, treated the appeal of his French colleague with respect, and made it the text of a representation to the senior naval officer, urging him, if

possible, to devise means in conjunction with the measures which were already being adopted in the settlement for enforcing British neutrality, so that "we may be able to give an honest answer to all three belligerents—imperialists, insurgents, and French." This policy was at the same time proclaimed by a unanimous resolution of the largest meeting of residents ever, up to that time, assembled in Shanghai.

The question of the influx of refugees seems not to have met with such a prompt solution, but that was due rather to the British plenipotentiary's caution than to the obstruction of the Chinese. In a despatch to Sir John Bowring, dated June 5, 1854, the consul thus describes the evil in question:—

> As regards the strange and altogether unsatisfactory position in which we are placed by the pouring in of a large Chinese population, who have squatted down within our limits contrary to the standing edicts of their own authorities, and run up whole streets of wooden and brick tenements, giving cover to every species of vice and filth, I have only to remark that a walk through the settlement [the governor was expected on a visit] will, I am convinced, satisfy your Excellency that the evil is already too great and increasing at too rapid a rate to be overlooked. The health of foreign residents, the security of their property, and the very tenability of the place as a foreign location, alike render it imperative that a jurisdiction of some kind should be promptly and energetically asserted.

The important negotiations which, within three months, issued in the birth of the Foreign Maritime Customs, must be regarded as by far the most important outcome of the rebel episode of 1854-55.

III. THE CHINESE MARITIME CUSTOMS.

Extent and audacity of smuggling—Alcock's determination to suppress it—His report on the position—Corruption of the Chinese customs service—Efforts of the British Government to co-operate in collecting dues—Nullified by treaties with other Powers—Consequent injury to all foreign trade—Unexpected solution of the difficulty during the interregnum—Impetus given to trade by the Taiping rebellion—Alcock with French and American consuls takes over the customs and collects all dues in trust for the Chinese Government—Promissory notes employed—Conditions which made it impossible to enforce payment—Notes ultimately cancelled.

Certain crying evils in foreign intercourse having arrested the attention of Consul Alcock from the day of his arrival in China, he bent himself strenuously to the task of overcoming or mitigating them. They formed the subject-matter of many anxious reports to his superiors, for Mr Alcock always took both a serious and a comprehensive view of his duties. For many years there seemed little hope of a successful issue to these labours; but at last a rift in the clouds opened up the prospect of coping with at least one of them, and that was smuggling. So universal was this practice that it seemed a necessary and natural feature of all commercial dealings in China. As its roots lay deep in the Chinese character and civilisation, no stigma attached to the venality of the officials charged with the collection of the maritime revenues. Although the practice was in extent universal, it was by no means wholesale in degree, and where the facilities for evading duties were so tempting, merchants must often have been astonished at their own moderation.

Among the legends of the coast, it is true, there were certain *tours de force* in the way of smuggling which

made good topics for walnuts-and-wine conversation among a community which was rather lacking in subjects of general interest,—as of an apocryphal ship clearing from China in ballast or with coal which would mysteriously land in England a full cargo of tea, which had been taken on board without being passed through the custom-house. Conversely, a shipload of manufactured goods taken on board in England would melt on the passage to China like a cargo of ice, so far as the records in the Chinese custom-house would show. One special feat was kept alive, post-prandially, for many years as the acme of audacious smuggling. British goods were entered at the custom-house "for re-exportation," and no duty paid. The merchant packed the empty cases with silk, which was thus shipped under the original English marks, and was described as calicoes, on which a "drawback" was claimed of import duties which had never been paid at all. Such racy anecdotes belonged to the order of Rabelaisian humour which inspired the boast of a certain Lancashire manufacturer at the time when, owing to the scarcity and high price of cotton, the "filling" of shirtings with plaster of Paris and other substances to make up the required weight of the piece was raised to almost the dignity of a fine art. Complaints being made by the consumer that the cloth so compounded would not wash, this genial Lancastrian declared that for his part he would never rest satisfied until he could turn out his calicoes without any cotton in them at all.

Shanghai, of course, was the great centre of the smuggling trade. What smuggling was done at Canton, being the only other important entrepot, was on a system which was regulated by the customs authori-

ties themselves, and the testimony of Mr Alexander Matheson before the House of Commons Committee was to the effect that their tariff was so light that it was not worth the merchant's while to smuggle. Such, however, was not the view taken by Mr Consul Alcock, who regarded the smuggling system as a very serious evil, against which he waged a relentless war. He not only compelled, as far as lay in his power, the British merchants to comply with the letter of the treaty in their dealings with the customs, but he further considered himself bound to enforce on the Chinese officials themselves the proper discharge of their duty. In these efforts to abolish irregular practices, which all deplored, many of the British merchants were only too willing to co-operate with the consul's efforts, and the Foreign Office was repeatedly moved to take some action in the reform of these abuses. The difficulties and anomalies of the situation were fully set forth by Mr Alcock in many reports made to his superior, the chief superintendent of trade, as the following extract, written in 1851, will exemplify:—

How the commercial and custom-house system of the West and the very opposite principles and practice of the East might be combined so that both should work together with the least possible friction and prejudice, was a difficult problem, no doubt, for those who had the framing of existing treaties. How even the trading operations of foreign merchants, based upon good faith and honesty, could be in any way associated with the corrupt and inept administration of the Chinese custom-house, so that the revenue of the latter alone should be liable to suffer and not the foreign trade, though apparently a simpler task, seems to have presented to the negotiators insuperable difficulties. For one or other of these problems, nevertheless, it was essential they should find some adequate solution, or whatever treaties might be signed their real mission was un-

fulfilled, and the basis of all future trading relations left unstable and unsatisfactory.

We cannot suppose this important fact was overlooked by the British Government, which, on the contrary, appears to have sought earnestly to meet the difficulty by undertaking in good faith to co-operate with the Chinese authorities in collecting the duties on British trade. Neither is it clear that failure would have attended such a course had not a disturbing element been speedily introduced from without for which adequate provision does not seem to have been made. We allude to the ratification of treaties with other Governments which should repudiate all obligation on this point to contribute to the protection of the Chinese revenue. It might have been supposed that the Chinese Government, having obtained so great and unquestionable an advantage from the Power they had most to fear, would scarcely have been so foolish as to throw it away upon the first occasion, yet such proved to be the fact, and some credit was taken by the United States commissioner for the omission of all co-operative clauses. Two treaties in consequence came into operation, founded upon different principles—the one subversive of the other in a very essential point. So much was this the case that no fair trial could be given to the provisions of the British treaty respecting the payment of duties, and any attempt to act upon the system contemplated in it became altogether unpracticable so soon as the alteration of our navigation laws opened our ports to foreign shipping.

We found that to secure the essential objects of these treaties as they now stand there is one thing plainly wanting and yet essential, an honest and efficient custom-house, and who does not see that this is unattainable in China? Too much or too little has been done, therefore. We should either have refused to concede a right to levy maritime duties, or obtained as the condition some better guarantee for its impartial exercise. It should have been remembered that although a foreign Power might give this right to the Emperor of China, it could not so easily give him honest and faithful servants, without which custom-house duties cannot be fairly levied. The very attempt to profit by such a right partially, and with manifestly imperfect means, could not fail to prove injurious to the trade it was the great object of the treaties to

develop and protect. It is superfluous now to say that against this evil no sufficient provision was made, and the result has been perpetual and irreconcilable antagonism. From the first day the American treaty came into operation the contracting parties, Chinese and foreign, have been placed in a false position in regard to each other and to the permanent interests of both. The emperor had obtained a right he could not unaided duly exercise, and the foreign merchant was laid under a legal obligation which under such circumstances tended to make his trading privileges nugatory. The former was daily exposed to the loss of the whole or a part of a revenue to which he was by treaty legally entitled, as the price of commercial privileges to the foreigner; and the latter, in so far as he recognised his obligation to pay to such revenue, was debarred from trading with advantage or profit.

Loss to the custom-house is palpably only one of the mischiefs resulting, and injury to foreign trade is the direct consequence in a far more important degree. There may be some disposed to question this, but when no man can calculate on entering into an operation within 15 or 20 per cent of the prime cost of his merchandise before it shall leave his hands, and his next-door neighbour may gain advantage over him to this amount, while the ordinary margin of profit seldom exceeds that range, it is difficult to arrive at any other conclusion. And when we consider that the natural tendency of partial smuggling is to raise the price in the buying and to lower it in the selling market, its disastrous influence on the general prosperity of the trade must be too plain to admit of contradiction. However it may temporarily enrich a few, it must eventually impoverish many.

The British plenipotentiary may have thought that smuggling, so far as the interests of trade were concerned, would affect only the Chinese revenue: the American commissioner clearly must have concluded so, and on this supposition acted. But experience has abundantly proved such a conclusion erroneous, and based upon a partial view of the whole case.

The solution of all these difficulties, and the end of the apparently hopeless struggle to set things right, came about in a way that must have been totally unex-

pected by all parties. It was through the capture of Shanghai by the rebel band in 1853.

The day the city fell the functions of the custom-house ceased, but trade continued without interruption; indeed the export trade was naturally stimulated by the eagerness of the natives to convert their produce into money, and by the desire of the foreign merchants to get their purchases safely on board ship. But there was no one in a position to collect the dues. Mr Alcock, never timid when he had a case for action which satisfied his own mind, proposed to his French and American colleagues, who also never seemed to hesitate to follow his lead, a method of bridging over the interregnum of the Chinese authority and at the same time establishing for the first time the precedent of collecting full duties. The plan was that the consuls should themselves perform the functions which the Chinese officials had never performed — take a rigid account of the goods landed and shipped, and receive the amount of the duty on them, to be held in trust for the Chinese Government when it should once more be resuscitated in Shanghai. Not in coin, however, but in promissory notes payable on conditions which were complicated by the necessity of maintaining equality of treatment between the various nationalities concerned. The contingencies were, in fact, such that it would never have been possible to enforce payment of the notes, and in the end they were all cancelled and returned to the merchants, so that during the ten months between September 1853 and July 1854 there were no duties collected at all at the port of Shanghai.

IV. CREATION OF THE FOREIGN CUSTOMS.

The provisional system—British and American ships pay full dues—Other nations enter and clear free—Americans follow the same course—Alcock's strict views of neutrality—Danger of infringing it by establishment of Government officials within the foreign colony—Breakdown of the provisional system—Alcock calls upon the Imperial Government—Custom-house re-established by the Taotai Wu—Reappearance of all abuses — Alcock's remonstrances — Antecedents of Wu — He makes private arrangements and admits vessels free of dues—Alcock allows British ships to do likewise—Shanghai thus becomes a free port—Alcock's efforts to meet the difficulty—First idea of the foreign customs—Conditions of success—Conference with the Taotai—Delegates appointed—New custom-house inaugurated July 12, 1854—Mr H. N. Lay appointed Inspector-General—Conditions and essential features which caused immediate and permanent success of the foreign customs.

The "provisional system," as it was called, worked smoothly for four months, but not equally, for while British and American ships paid full duties (in conditional promissory notes), those of other nationalities, having mercantile consuls, were entered and cleared exempt from all duty. One Prussian, one Hamburg, two Siamese, one Austrian, three Danish, and two Spanish—in all ten vessels—were so cleared between September and January, which was, of course, a serious injustice to the competing merchants on whose ventures full duties were levied. In vain might the British consul argue that the cargoes of these defaulting ships bore no larger a proportion to the whole trade than in normal conditions the smugglers would bear to the honest traders. The American consul, sympathising with the latter, notified on January 20, 1854, his secession from the provisional compact, to which decision he gave immediate effect by allowing two vessels, the Oneida and Science, to depart without payment or

security of any kind. It was impossible after this for the British authorities to continue to lay a burden on their nationals from which competitors were thus freeing themselves, the more especially as on broader considerations their collecting duties at all for the Chinese had been, three years previously, pronounced inexpedient by the British Government. However commendable, therefore, on political and moral grounds, and however convenient as a stop-gap, the provisional system was doomed. The next move was by some means or other to procure the re-establishment of a legal Chinese custom-house.

This would have been done at an earlier period but for the strict views held by Mr Alcock on the question of neutrality between the belligerents. The soil of the foreign settlement had been declared sacred and neutral. To permit any Chinese authority to use it even for fiscal purposes seemed a violation of its neutrality. Besides, native officials exercising their functions there would have had either to protect themselves by military force, however small, or to be protected by the foreigners, in either case compromising the neutrality of the settlement. When the Chinese officials proposed as an alternative to discharge customs functions afloat in the river, the same objections presented themselves. The foreigners must in that case also have defended the revenue collectors from attack by the rebels. The customs authority therefore remained dormant.

But on the breakdown of the provisional system whereby the three treaty consuls acted as trustees for the Chinese Government, there was no alternative left between making Shanghai absolutely a free port and setting up some sort of native custom-house. As the

lesser evil—to say no more—Mr Alcock chose the latter, and within three weeks of the lapse of the provisional system he had "called upon the imperial authorities to re-establish a custom-house in some convenient locality," offering at the same time to afford them the necessary facilities for working it. The custom-house was, in fact, re-established by the Taotai Wu on February 9, when the provisional system of collecting duties, a system never favoured by the British Government, was finally and officially terminated.

The reinstatement of the custom-house under the superintendency of the Taotai Wu was the signal for the prompt reappearance of all the worst irregularities in an exaggerated form.

The admonitions that official received from Mr Alcock on his treaty rights and on the necessity for strictness and impartial accuracy were completely thrown away. The Taotai had been formerly a merchant in Canton, under the name Samqua; and whether it was the passion for a "deal" inspired by early training, or the corruption of good manners by subsequent association with official life, or, as is most likely, a double dose of both, without the checks appropriate to either, he, the superintendent of customs, fell at once to making private bargains with individual merchants. By arrangement with him a Bremen ship, the Aristides, was allowed to enter and clear without complying with a single customs or port regulation or the payment of any dues, save what may have been paid to Wu himself by way of douceur. Two American ships and one British were dealt with in similar fashion. These facts being brought to the notice of Mr Alcock, he called the Taotai to account, and on receiving only subterfuges

instead of explanation, he thenceforth allowed openly to British ships the same privileges that the Chinese authorities had voluntarily, though secretly, conferred on those who chose to make corrupt bargains with them. That is to say, Shanghai became now—from April 1854—absolutely a free port.

At last, then, there was a real *tabula rasa* inviting a fresh experiment; and Mr Alcock immediately applied his mind to devising some new expedient to meet the difficulty. The Chinese superintendent, however willing to compound to his own advantage for the customs' dues, was as little pleased with its complete abolition as the foreign authorities themselves, and he had made sundry alternative proposals, based on his experience at Canton, for the effective collection of duties. It seemed, however, that in the hands of such a facile official, or any one likely to succeed him, his remedies against smuggling were worse than the disease, and the necessity of a new departure began seriously to occupy the minds of the treaty consuls. The outcome was a novel scheme, which was mooted in a despatch to Sir John Bowring, dated May 1, 1854, in which Consul Alcock, while recognising that "the attempt will not be unaccompanied by serious difficulties," declared that he "did not relinquish all hope of success *if the collection of duties can in any way be brought under the effective control of the three treaty Powers as to the executive of the custom-house administration.*"

"On any other basis," he added, "I believe every effort to benefit the Chinese revenue and at the same time protect the honest merchant must in the nature of things prove nugatory." The idea took further shape in a memorandum of suggestions drawn up by Mr

Alcock on 15th June, when he stated that "the sole issue out of the difficulties by which the whole subject is beset under existing treaties is to be sought in the combination of a *foreign element of probity and vigilance with Chinese authority.*"

He adds as the first condition of success the "free concurrence of the Chinese authorities" in any scheme which may be concocted, and then proposes "the association with the Chinese executive of a responsible and trustworthy foreign *inspector of customs* as the delegate of the three treaty Powers, to be appointed by the consuls and Taotai conjointly at a liberal salary." This is put down at $6000 per annum, the whole foreign staff to cost $12,000, and various details of administration follow.

It argues well for the absence of international jealousy in those days that Mr Alcock proposed that a French gentleman of the name of Smith, in the French consular service, should be the inspector whom he and the American consul agreed to recommend to the Taotai. In a despatch to M. Edan on the 27th of June 1854 he solicited his official sanction to the appointment.

The next step was a conference where the three treaty consuls—Alcock, Murphy, and Edan—received the Taotai, who discussed with them and then adopted substantially, though with some modifications, the "suggestions" above quoted.

Instead of one delegate from the three consuls, it was decided that each was to appoint one, the three delegates then forming a "board of inspectors with a single and united action." As many questions of national and international jurisdiction were likely to

arise out of the executive functions of the inspectors, provision was made for dealing with them, and as far as human ingenuity could foresee without any experience to guide, every contingency, down to the minutiæ of internal administration, was considered in the instructions given to the inspectors. The announcement of the newly-constituted Customs Board was formally made by the consuls on July 6, and the new custom-house was inaugurated on the 12th, the three inspectors being Mr T. F. Wade, British; Mr Lewis Carr, American; and M. Smith, French.

The new custom-house was an immediate success: it fulfilled every purpose for which it was created, yielding its full revenue to the Chinese Government, and putting an end to the temptations of traders to seek illicit advantages over each other. It says much for the soundness of the principles on which it was established that not only has the custom-house of 1854 survived the shock of rebellion and war, of extended treaties, of the multiplication of trading-ports from five to thirty and of treaty Powers from three to thirteen, but its roots have struck deep and its branches have spread wide over every portion of the empire, and that in spite of the opposition of powerful provincial officials, whose revenues it curtailed by diverting them into the imperial channel. The triumvirate Board under which the institution was launched was little more than nominal, the direction of the customs being a one-man power from the outset, one only of the three inspectors possessing either the knowledge, capacity, or zeal needed to infuse life into the new department.

The first English inspector, who was only lent for a time to start the new enterprise, was replaced in a few

months by Mr H. N. Lay, interpreter to the consulate, who definitively retired from the British in order to enter the Chinese service, while Mr Wade returned to his vice-consular duties. The functions of the Board of Inspectors were soon consolidated in the office of Inspector-General, which was conferred upon Mr Lay, and held by him until 1863, when he was obliged to resign the service of the Chinese Government in consequence of their failure to ratify his engagements in connection with the Osborn flotilla.

It only remains to mention in this place that coincident with the establishment of the maritime customs in Shanghai came the instructions from her Majesty's Government to cancel the promissory notes, amounting to a million of dollars, which had been given by the British merchants for duties during the interregnum, the conditions attached rendering them legally invalid.

Although the organisation of the foreign customs was an expedient to meet an emergency never likely to recur, the transaction, nevertheless, forms a brief epitome of the ideal foreign relations with China, and it is useful therefore to note what were its essential features and the conditions of its creation.

First. The Chinese Government were reduced to helplessness and were amenable to advice.

Second. Corruption and laxity were inherent in their nature and ineradicable except by external force.

Third. The external force, to be savingly applied, must not be subversive of Chinese authority, but must supply the element in administration in which the natives are absolutely wanting, and which is so tersely summarised by Mr Alcock as "vigilance and probity."

Fourth. This combination of Chinese authority with

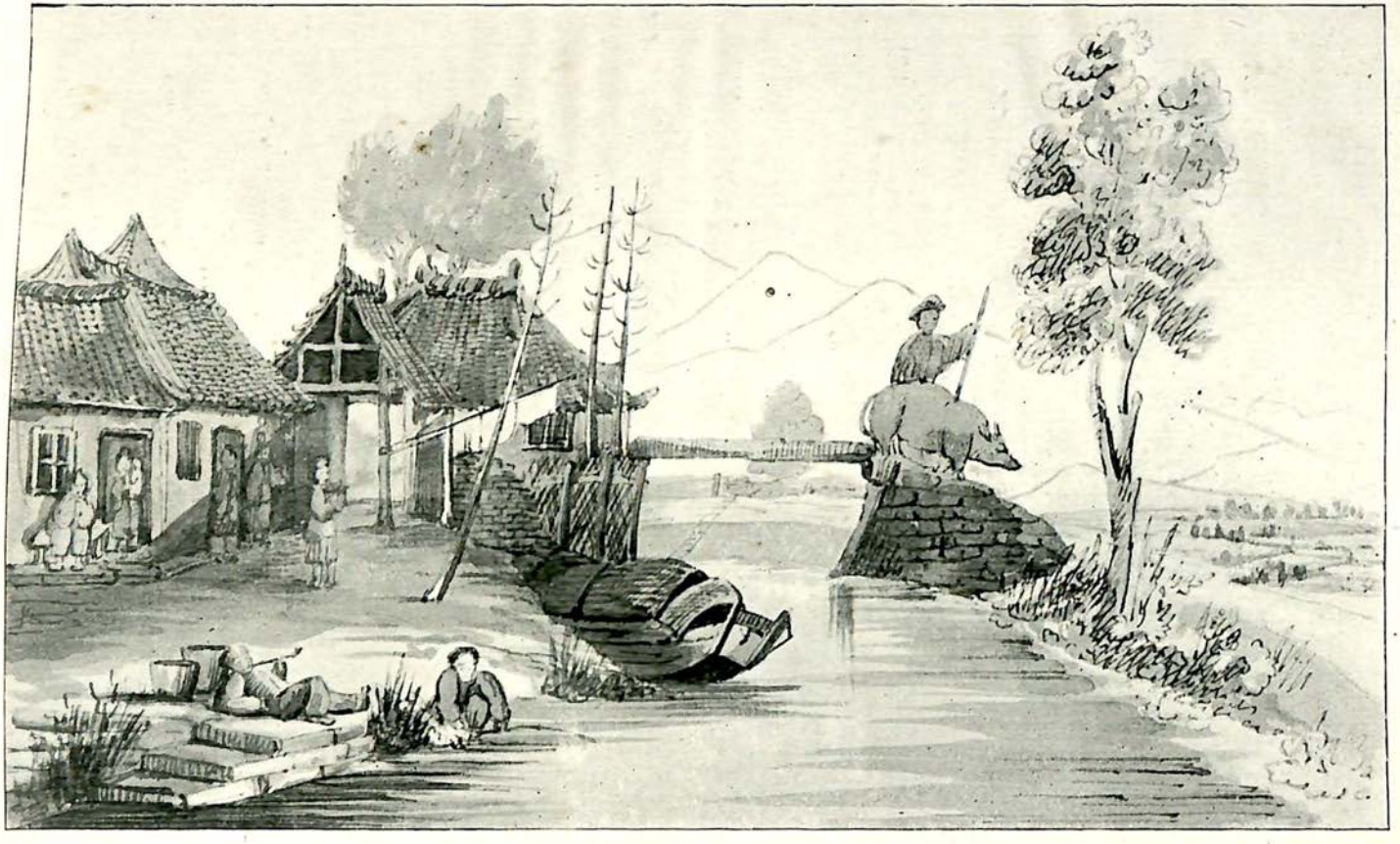
foreign vigilance and probity, which has rendered the Chinese customs service a kind of miracle of reform, was capable of renovating the whole Chinese administration. Why it has not been extended into the other departments of state is only another form of lament over lost opportunities.

Fifth. That the system was established on the broadest cosmopolitan basis.

V. MR ALCOCK'S DEPARTURE FROM SHANGHAI.

Promoted to Canton—Impression he had made upon the European colony of Shanghai—Their confidence in his integrity and ability—His domestic life—First literary work—Condition of affairs at Canton—Difficulties and obstructions—Alcock leaves for home before the outbreak of 1856.

With these distinguished services Mr Alcock's career in Shanghai was brought to a close. He was promoted to the senior consulate at Canton, but he remained long enough in his northern post to see the city of Shanghai once more in possession of the constituted authorities and the restoration of peace in the vicinity of the port. Being practically starved out, the insurgents set fire to the city and made the best escape they could during the night, which happened to be the last night of the Chinese year, 17th February 1855. Some may have escaped, but the greater part fell into the hands of their enemies, and for weeks afterwards many a ghastly trophy in the neighbourhood attested the ruthless treatment which the fugitives received, recalling the realistic picture in a certain epitaph of Villon.



RUSTIC SCENE NEAR SHANGHAI.

On his departure from Shanghai in April of that year Mr Alcock received a flattering testimonial from the British residents, who were cordially joined by both French and Americans. This compliment had the special value of being practically unanimous, while yet by no means undiscriminating. As a curious characteristic of the social relations of the community at that time, it may be mentioned that the document was presented in two parts, substantially the same, but differently worded. The explanation of the dual presentation is to be found in the etiquette which was commonly observed between the Montagues and the Capulets of the period, it being considered a point of honour that neither should follow the signature of the other; hence the two leading members of the community had each to head a separate list.

It was impossible for an officer of such strict views and such an uncompromising character to live for eight years in the midst of an independent population whom he had to treat as his subjects without provoking occasional resentment, and creating friction in carrying out the details of his administration. Moreover, his public acts were of too decisive a quality to commend themselves to universal approval. Yet, frankly recognising all this, the memorialists state, "In whatever degree as individuals we may have approved or dissented from any of your acts of public policy, we are all ready to do justice to the singleness of purpose and sense of public duty under which you have uniformly acted. We believe that you have throughout held in view your conscientious convictions of what was right and just, and that no undue external influence has at any time operated to divert you from them." In fact, the

Shanghai community—*quorum pars fui*—were proud of their consul, and looked up to him as soldiers do to a commander in whom they have absolute confidence. They felt themselves ennobled by contact with a character *sans peur et sans reproche.* Above all, he represented before the Chinese authorities the dignity of his country in a manner which has rarely been equalled, and gratitude for that patriotic service would of itself have covered a multitude of sins. The feeling of respect so generated reconciled the residents to that which in another man might have been held to savour of coldness, for in social life he was reserved, if not somewhat haughty in his bearing,—partly no doubt from temperament, but chiefly from absorption in the duties and responsibilities of his office, in researches into all the matters which concerned his work, and in the study of subjects which were congenial to his mind. It may also be said, without reflection on either party, that those robust recreations which engrossed the leisure of younger men—and the community was very young —were not of a kind with which the consul had much personal sympathy. His own distractions were more of a literary and reflective order. He did not unbend to gain popularity.

His domestic life left him nothing to desire in the way of society. To his wife he was most devoted, and to her he addressed, in half soliloquy, a series of thoughts on religious subjects which reveal more than anything the deep earnestness of his nature. When this loving helpmeet was snatched from his side in March 1853, the calm exterior was little disturbed; but having to face that immense gap in his life, he was thrown more than ever on his mental resources. His isolation was

the more keenly felt when he was relieved from the heavy demand which the affairs of Shanghai had made on his energies, and it was in the comparative leisure of Canton that he composed his first serious political contribution to periodical literature, an outlet for his thoughts which proved such an attraction to him to the end of his life. His first essay was an article in the 'Bombay Quarterly Review' on "The Chinese Empire and its Destinies," published in October 1855. It was soon followed by a second, entitled "The Chinese Empire and its Foreign Relations," a paper which fills no less than seventy-eight pages of the 'Review.' The two together form an able disquisition on the state of China which has not become obsolete by lapse of time.

It was during the same period also that he composed that series of short essays which were published anonymously under the title of 'Life's Problems.' Instead of attempting any appreciation of that little volume, we prefer to quote the impression it made on one reader many years afterwards. In a letter of Dora Greenwell, published in her Memoirs, she says: "I have met with a friend, a book that seems to take my whole rational nature along with it. I have seen no such book now or at any former time; and it is a book I have often longed for, yet never hoped for—a book contemplating *life* as it is in a Christian spirit, yet from the natural standpoint."

The consulate in Canton during the year that Mr Alcock occupied the post presented nothing of sensational interest. There was a superficial lull there, the lull before the storm which burst in October 1856, after Mr Alcock had left for home on his first well-

earned furlough. The chronic obstruction to business and the old difficulties in communicating with the Chinese authorities formed the burden of his reports to his chief, Sir John Bowring. The question of direct intercourse and of access to the city, which had been put off from time to time, was still unsettled. The definitive postponement of the treaty right of entry till 1849 had not rendered the solution of it one whit easier. On the contrary, the concession had only served to confirm the Chinese officials and people in their determination to resist the claim for ever. On the accession of Lord Palmerston to the Premiership in 1855 the dormant claim was revived, and Sir John Bowring was instructed by the Government to obtain unrestricted intercourse with the native authorities and the full exercise of the right of admission to all the cities which were opened to trade, Canton included. To repeated applications of this tenor the Viceroy Yeh replied by the traditional evasions, thus laying the train for the explosion which soon followed.

Mr Alcock being personally severed from the chain of events which led to the outbreak of hostilities in the autumn of 1856, it will be convenient here to suspend the narrative and glance at some of those general questions which form the subject-matter of our relations with China.

CHAPTER X.

CONSUL ALCOCK'S VIEWS ON GENERAL POLICY.

Essays on international relations—Foresight—Its connection with succeeding events—The Canton city question resuscitated.

AMONG serious students of the international problems arising out of the forced intercourse of the Western nations with China, Sir Rutherford Alcock occupies the first rank. In the long roll of consular and diplomatic agents employed by the British Government since 1833 he stands alone in the effort to evolve a reasonable working scheme out of the chaos of blunders and misunderstandings which marked the opening of China to foreign trade. Mr Taylor Meadows, another consular officer, though equally far-sighted, was perhaps too philosophical for the exigencies of current business. Consul Alcock's political philosophy, on the other hand, grew entirely out of the facts with which he had to deal from day to day, and was therefore essentially practical.

It might seem that fifty-year-old disquisitions on what we now call the "China question" must have too much of the musty odour of ancient history about them to afford profitable reading to a gener-

ation which has only been aroused by the thunder of events to take an interest—and that as yet perfunctory—in the affairs of the Far East. But as Mr Alcock had the faculty of getting to the heart of things, of seizing the principles which do not change, his early studies have lost neither validity nor value through the lapse of years. On these well-digested observations, accordingly, modern inquirers may confidently rely as on a corner-stone of Anglo-Chinese politics well and truly laid. And the lapse of time, so far from detracting from the utility of these opinions, enhances their value. For by extending the base of observation over a long period, errors due to personal equation, change of circumstance, and other temporary causes, are eliminated from the survey, and the seeker after truth is thus furnished with a trustworthy criterion by which he may verify his conclusions. The forecast of 1849, realised in the developments of 1900, affords strong proof that the earlier generalisations were not the result of ingenious speculation.

It seems reasonable, therefore, here to introduce some of the reflections of Consul Alcock while he was as yet comparatively new to China. These occur in various forms, as in confidential despatches, in private memoranda, and notes for literary articles apparently never extended. One of these notes, dated January 19, 1849, summing up the results of six years' working of the treaty of Nanking, may well serve as a landmark in the record of foreign intercourse with China.

Some extracts from this and other papers are printed for the convenience of the reader in an Appendix to the

present volume.[1] Though bearing directly on the policy of the time when they were written, they are no less applicable to present circumstances. They show that nothing had changed then, as nothing has changed since, in the attitude of the Chinese to foreign nations. "The same arrogant and hostile spirit exists, and their policy is still to degrade foreigners in the eyes of the people. . . . Without the power [on our part] of commanding attention to any just demands, there is every reason to believe the Chinese rulers would still be the most impracticable of Orientals. . . . We cannot hope that any effort of ours or of the emperor would suffice to change at once the character and habits of the people or even the population of a city."

While advocating a resolute policy in maintaining all British rights granted by treaty, the far-sighted consul uttered a timely caution against pushing demands for concessions too far. In this he was in accord with the policy, often enunciated by the British Government, of not imperilling what we already possessed by striving after more. Mr Alcock indicates clearly the danger which threatened British interests from the prospective influx of Western Powers pressing through the doors which Great Britain might be constrained to open :—

> Powers who, having no such great interests to jeopardise, are without this beneficial and most needful check, and may therefore be induced to repeat at a semi-barbarian Court the intrigues and counter-projects for the destruction of our influence and the injury of our trade in the East which are at work in our own times in every capital in Europe, as formerly in India and the Eastern Archipelago.

[1] See Appendix I.

Nor could a much more accurate description of the state of affairs now existing be given than the picture of the future drawn by Consul Alcock:—

> Russia, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, and America, with their several jealousies and united rivalry with England, their missionary enterprises or commercial and political schemes clashing in their aim and development, are all capable of creating such turmoil, strife, and disturbance throughout the empire, if free access to the Court and the provinces were insisted upon by Great Britain, as could only end in the ejection of Europeans from China as formerly from Japan, or an intestine war in which European force would probably be involved on opposite sides, and to their mutual destruction as States with commercial interests in the country. These, again, might lead to attempts at territorial possession, suggested in the first instance, as in India, in self-defence, and afterwards continued from necessity. With Russia spreading her gigantic arms to the north and east, Great Britain on the south and west, Spain, Holland, and Portugal with their colonies in the Chinese and Indian seas, a struggle for superiority on the soil of China for exclusive advantages or predominant influence might be centred in Peking and embroil the whole of Europe in hostile relations.

An interesting feature in the prognostications of both Mr Alcock and Mr Meadows in those early days was the ignoring of the Power which is now assuming such an active part in the rearrangement of the Far East. Germany was not even thought of as a world Power, but her entry on the stage has only added confirmation to the soundness of all these predictions.

The more immediate significance, however, of the elaborate exposition of the Anglo-Chinese situation which we are now considering, lay in its connection with the chain of events which followed within a few years, and its coincidence with the progress in the

views of the British Government, which might almost be traced back to the date of the paper. The year 1849 was one of the critical epochs in foreign intercourse with China, for it was then that the last promissory note as to the opening of Canton became due, and was dishonoured. The years of grace successively granted to the Chinese authorities to enable them to prepare for the execution of the treaty stipulation had been used by them, or at any rate by the populace, to render its execution permanently impossible. Mr Bonham, who proceeded up the river to apply for the fulfilment of the agreement of 1847, which promised admission to the city within two years, was received, not with the suave evasion of Kiying but with the coarse rebuff of Governor-General Seu, who amid popular enthusiasm caused a memorial arch to be erected to commemorate the third repulse of the barbarians. The turning-point of affairs had been now reached; the scales fell from the eyes of the British Government. Reluctantly they were driven to the conclusion that they had for seven years been trifled with, that their agents, one after another, had been duped; that while they deluded themselves by imagining that by their concessions they were pouring oil on water, they were, in fact, throwing that inflammable substance on fire. Such systematic blunders could not be made with impunity. It began, in short, to be perceived that the ground so weakly surrendered at Canton could not be recovered without, in the prophetic words of Lord Palmerston, "coming to blows" once more with the Chinese.

The attention of the British Government being thus

seriously directed to China, they entered into correspondence with their plenipotentiary, the governor of Hongkong, as to the best means of arresting the decline of British prestige and of placing the interests of trade and residence on a satisfactory footing. The plenipotentiary had no resource but one for obtaining either information or advice on such large questions, and that was always Consul Alcock at Shanghai, a thousand miles from the seat of trouble, who had not then even seen Canton. Mr Alcock was alert to respond to the invitation of his chief, copiously, fearlessly, and with masterly lucidity as well as comprehensiveness. In a despatch to Sir George Bonham dated January 13, 1852, the development of the new policy may be traced.[1] And the whole situation is fully laid bare in a further despatch of June 17, 1852.[2]

This confidential official correspondence,[3] carried on for a number of years, constitutes a natural introduction to the chapter of history which was about to open. In the transactions which led to a second rupture with China Consul Alcock had personally no part, for he was on leave in England, but there also his voice was heard in the discussion of the causes and objects of the war.

In a series of letters to the press, during 1857-58, commenting on the progress of events, Mr Alcock endeavoured to keep the British public informed of what was transpiring in China, the reasons for it, and the probable consequences. These letters were republished in pamphlet form, of course anonymously.

[1] See Appendix II. [2] See Appendix III.
[3] See Appendices I., II., and III.

CHAPTER XI.

TRADE UNDER THE TREATY OF NANKING.

Trade the sole motive in all British and American dealings with China—Simplicity of this trade—Chief staple imports and exports—Data for any review of Chinese trade—Mutual alarm caused by excess of imports—Peculiar conditions of British trade—Entailing a loss of over 30 per cent, yet steadily maintained—System of barter—Consequent impossibility of clear accounts—And ignorance of position at any given moment—Trade also hampered by traditions of the East India Company—Such as that of keeping large stores on hand—Gradual improvement on these methods—Advantages of landed investment in China—Perceived and acted on by the Jesuits—And later by foreign merchants—The American trade—Similarity of currency—Excess of Chinese exports met by shipments of specie—And later by credits on London banks.

WHATEVER may be said of that of other nations, the intercourse of Great Britain and the United States with China, from the earliest period to the latest, whether in peace or war, has had no other object than trade between the nations, and therefore all the steps in that intercourse must be judged in their relation to the promotion of international commerce. War and diplomacy, geographical exploration and reforms, even literary researches and mutual instruction, being all ancillary to the main purpose, it seems fitting to consider as briefly as may be what manner of thing it was which set, and still keeps, all these auxiliary forces in motion.

From its first introduction till now one feature has characterised the Chinese foreign trade, and that is its simplicity. Both on the export and the import side a few staple commodities have made up its whole volume, and in this respect the statistics of to-day differ but little from those of fifty years ago. The leading Chinese imports at the conclusion of the first war were: From India, opium and raw cotton, to which has been added, since the development of steam factories, cotton yarn. From England, plain bleached and unbleached cotton goods, cotton yarn, some descriptions of woollens, iron and lead, account for nearly the whole value. The trade from the United States and the continent of Europe in those days did not greatly affect the general aggregate. The exports of Chinese produce were at the period in question almost confined to the one article—tea. Subseqently silk grew into importance, and soon exceeded in value the great speciality of China. Rhubarb was a commodity on which, next to tea, the Chinese affected to lay much stress, on the ground that foreigners were dependent upon it for the preservation of their health, and that stopping the supply might offer an easy means of coercing them. But the article never assumed any important commercial value. Sugar, camphor, and matting were also among the exports, the last named being much in demand in the United States. It is only of recent years, however, that anything like assorted cargoes of produce have been sent away from the Chinese ports. The trade has passed through many vicissitudes, has had its periodical ebb and flow, but has on the whole been prosaically progressive. And this has been

especially the case with the imports of British and other Western produce.

It would be instructive to review the circumstances of the Chinese trade at successive stages of its progress, and to note the grievances of merchants and manufacturers at different epochs and the obstacles to commercial development as they were felt from time to time. It would be more interesting to do this were it possible to discriminate between permanent causes and temporary accidents. But it is not always what is of the most lasting importance that makes the strongest impression upon those who are actively engaged in the struggle for life. The trader does not greatly differ from the world at large in his love of a whipping-boy—that is to say, in the common tendency to attribute mischances to objective rather than to subjective causes. Prosperity, like good health, is, to those who enjoy it, its own sufficient explanation, the normal reward of the merit each one takes to himself as a matter of course. Adversity, on the other hand, is assigned to demonic origin, its victims being martyrs to the powers of nature or the hostile combinations of men. For these reasons it would be as difficult to gather from their own accounts what were the real helps and what the real hindrances to the traders' progress, as to draw general conclusions on the state of agriculture from conversations with working farmers. The commercial circular is a familiar product of the modern era of open trade. It undertakes to record the actual state of markets and to give the reasons why they are not otherwise. If one were to circumnavigate the globe and compare the ordinary run of these reports issuing from the great

emporia, one feature would be found common to them all—it is the bogy. Everything would be for the best —but for certain adverse influences. It may be the vagaries of some Finance Minister or Tariff Commission, the restraint of princes, war, pestilence, or famine—inundations here and droughts there; but a something there must always be to explain away the moral accountability of the individual traders, manufacturers, or planters. China and Japan have seldom been without such fatalistic obstacles to commerce. For many years the rebellion was the *bête noire* of merchants, then the mandarins, and smaller rebellions; the scarcity of specie at one period, at another the superabundance of cheap silver. In Burma the King of Ava stood for long as the root of all commercial evil. In Japan the Daimios and the currency served their turn. India is never without calamities sufficient to account for perhaps more than ever happens there. All such drawbacks, however, though real enough as far as they go, are never exhaustive, and seldom even reach to the core of the problem. They are as atmospheric phenomena, to be observed, taken advantage of, or provided against, and are extremely interesting to the individuals immediately affected by them. But as regards the general course of trade, such incidents are but as storms on the surface of the deep oceanic currents: it is the onward sweep of the great volume of traffic that alone possesses public interest. Of the circumstances which influence the course and direction of that beneficent current a collation of the utterances of traders would yield but a refracted account. So that in order to appreciate the progress of commerce we have to fall back on the unadorned columns of statistical tables, which themselves

leave something to be desired on the score of completeness.[1]

With regard to certain periods of the China trade we have rather full data, as, for instance, in the decade following the war, when the working of the trade exercised the minds both of British merchants and of their Government in a degree which has scarcely been equalled since. The same may be predicated of the Chinese Government also, and, as has been observed in a previous chapter, it was an interesting coincidence that during that critical period it was the self-same grievance that pressed on both sides — namely, the insufficiency of the Chinese exported produce to pay for the goods imported. The effect of this on the Chinese Government was to excite unfeigned alarm at the steady drain of silver required to pay for the excess of their imports. On the British side the grievance came home to the manufacturers in the form of the incapacity of the Chinese to take off an adequate quantity of the products of English looms. The remedy proposed from the two sides was thoroughly characteristic of their respective traditions. On the Chinese side it was negative, obstructive, prohibitory, and absolutely vain. On the British side the proposal was positive, expansive, and in accord with the spirit of modern commerce. The Chinese remedy was to forbid the export of silver and the import of opium, which, being the article in most urgent demand, was usually paid for in bullion or in coined dollars. The English remedy was to stimulate the export of Chinese produce. But here a paradox stands in the way of a clear perception of the

[1] The annual value of the whole foreign trade with China, imports and exports, is now about £70,000,000.

position. The British trade was being carried on at a loss, which some of the merchants estimated at 33 per cent on the round venture. That is to say, manufactured goods were sold in China at a loss of 15 to 20 per cent, and the proceeds, being invested in Chinese produce, realised a further loss on sale in England of 17 or 20 per cent.

To account for this unremunerative trade being carried on voluntarily year after year, it is necessary to remember the great distance of the two markets in the days before the introduction of steam and the shortening of the voyage by the piercing of the Suez Canal. We have to allow also for the gambling or speculative element which animates all commerce, and the "hope-on-hope-ever" spirit without which no distant adventure would ever be undertaken. The rationale of the phenomenon was reduced to a very simple expression by Mr Gregson, who, when asked by the Committee of the House of Commons if he could explain "the singular proceeding of continuing the trade for a series of years with perpetual losses on it," replied: "The manufacturers reason that as the losses have been considerable the exports will fall off, and therefore they may export again. They are generally deceived, because their neighbours taking the same view, the exports are kept up and the loss continues."

The case thus bluntly stated by Mr Gregson was not such a temporary phase as might naturally have been concluded. The same remarkable features continued for many years afterwards more or less characteristic of the China trade, so that had another commission been appointed to consider the subject they would have been

surprised to find the old riddle still awaiting solution, Why so regular and simple a trade should be carried on apparently without profit? The data of supply and demand being well ascertained, prices remunerative to the merchant might have been expected to arrange themselves automatically. Further explanations seem, in fact, required to supplement Mr Gregson's, and some of these must appear somewhat whimsical and far-fetched to the general reader. The peculiar method in vogue of stating accounts was not perhaps without its influence in obscuring the merchants' perceptions of the merits of their current operations. The trade being virtually conducted by barter, the sale of a particular parcel of goods did not necessarily close the venture. A nominal price was agreed upon between buyer and seller for the convenience of account-keeping, but this almost always had reference to the return investment in tea or other produce. So that British goods were regarded as a means of laying down funds in China for the purchase of tea, while tea was regarded as a return remittance for the proceeds of manufactured goods, and as a means of laying down funds in England for further investments in the same commodity for shipment to China. The trade thus revolving in an eternal circle, having neither beginning nor end, it was impossible to pronounce definitely at what particular point of the revolution the profit or loss occurred. A bad out-turn of goods exported would, it was hoped, be compensated for by the favourable result of the produce imported, and *vice versâ, ad infinitum.* Thus no transaction stood on its own merits or received the unbiassed attention of the merchants. Their accounts did not show the actual amount of loss or gain on a particular invoice, the

formula simply recording the price at which the venture, as an operation in exchange, "laid down the dollar." The par value of that coin being taken at 4s. 4d., the out-turn of a sterling invoice which yielded the dollar at any price below that was of course a gain, or anything above it a loss. But the gain or loss so registered was merely provisional. The dollar as such was never realised: it was but a fiction of the accountant, which acquired its substantial value only when reinvested in Chinese produce. The final criterion, therefore, was how much the dollar invoices of Chinese produce would yield back in sterling money when sold in London, and how that yield compared with the "laid-down" cost of the dollar in China. But even that finality was only provisional so long as the circuit of reinvestment was uninterrupted.

Merchants were not called upon to face their losses as they were made, nor could they realise their profits as they were earned. Long before one year's account could be closed, the venture of one or two subsequent years had been launched beyond recall, and the figures of the newest balance-sheet related to transactions which, having already become ancient history, were but a dry study compared with the new enterprises bearing the promise of the future and absorbing the whole interest of the merchant. Business was thus carried on very much in the dark, the eyes of the trader being constantly directed forward, while past experience was not allowed its legitimate influence in forming the judgment. A blind reliance on the equalising effect of averages was perhaps the safest principle on which such a commerce could be carried on. The merchants themselves were wont to say that after drawing the

clearest inferences from experience, and making the most careful estimates of probabilities, the wisest man was he who could act contrary to the obvious deductions therefrom. Business thus became a kind of concrete fatalism.

The China trade was, moreover, much hampered by certain traditions of the East India Company which long clung to its skirts. One of these relics of conservatism, transmitted from the days of the maritime wars, was the principle of storing up merchandise at both termini. It was an understood thing that the Company should never keep less than two years' supply of tea in the London warehouses, and long after the Company ceased to trade stocks of that commodity often amounted to nearly twelve months' consumption. Similarly, manufactured goods were accumulated, whether of set purpose or from the mere force of habit, in the China depots. The merchant seemed to have inherited the principle of holding merchandise for some ideal price, locking up his own or his constituents' capital, incurring cumulative charges on commodities which were all the while deteriorating in value, and eventually perhaps selling under some financial or other pressure. A certain satisfaction seems to have been derived from the contemplation of a full "go-down," as if the merchandise there stored had been realised wealth instead of a block to such realisation.

That primitive state of affairs is now a thing of the past, since the progress of the world during the last thirty years has revolutionised not the foreign trade of China, but the peculiar system on which it was carried on. The distribution of capital and the services of

Exchange banks exploded many conservative doctrines. The first merchants who, perceiving the necessity of reforming the habits of the trade, boldly resolved to "sell and repent" on the arrival of their merchandise, were pitied by their more antiquated neighbours, and thought to be likely to stand much in need of repentance. But in their case wisdom has been justified of her children.

This bald sketch of the trade customs inherited from the East India Company, though typical, is by no means exhaustive. There were, both before and after the treaty of Nanking, many byways and specialities and exceptions by which the vicious circle was broken with happy results to the individuals. Indeed at all points there have been collateral avenues to fortune contributory enterprises more profitable than those which were purely commercial. The various ways of taxing commerce, as by insurance, freightage, storage lighterage, packing, financing, &c., have afforded, on the whole, safe and good returns on capital. In countries where family improvidence is prevalent, and where capital is scarce and dear, as is the case generally in the Far East, both the opportunity and the inducement to invest in real estate are afforded to those who are in a position to take advantage of them,—for the same conditions which bring property into the market provide the tenants for the new proprietors. By following with that singleness of purpose which distinguishes all their proceedings the line of financial policy so obviously suggested by this state of things, the Jesuits, Lazarists, and other religious orders have gradually accumulated in every locality where they have settled a very large amount of

house property in and around populous centres. By this means they have laid whole communities of natives, and even foreigners, under permanent tribute to the Church, and have thereby rendered their missions independent of subventions from Christian countries. Many of the foreign merchants, following this worldly-wise example, have in like manner rendered themselves independent of mercantile business.

The American trade was for the most part exempt from the drawbacks as well as the advantages of the circuit system. The similarity of currency helped to simplify American commerce with China, and though from an early period the United States exported manufactures to that country, these went but a little way in payment for the products which they imported from China. Hence large shipments of specie had to be made to purchase their cargoes. No statistics exist, but Mr Hunter incidentally mentions one ship carrying amongst other cargo $350,000, and three other vessels carrying between them $1,100,000, which may be taken as typical of the course of trade prior to the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly. This mode of paying for produce was succeeded in after-years by credits on London banks, drafts under which supplied the most convenient medium of remittance to shippers of opium and other produce from India. The circuit was trilateral, and to a considerable extent remains so.

I. TEA.

Causes of bad state of trade—Failure of hopes built on "free" trade—Efforts for improvement—Select Committee of 1847—Excessive duties in England—Irregularities in valuation—Annual consumption at this time—Revenue from the duties—Beginnings of the India tea trade—Mr Robert Fortune—Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General, introduces tea culture, 1834—Assam Company founded 1839—Fortune's missions to China—Tea-plant indigenous in India—Progress of scientific culture—Vicissitudes of the trade—Ultimate success of the India and Ceylon trade—An example of Western as against Eastern methods—Tea-planting introduced in Ceylon—Rapid increase there—Why China has been supplanted in the market—Ingenuity and enterprise of the Indian planters—A victory of race and progress—Obstructive measures of the Chinese Government.

There was an apparent inconsistency in the outcry for larger quantities of Chinese produce to balance the trade, while the small quantity that did come forward could only be sold at a loss. The explanation may partly be found in the "boom" which naturally ensued on the emancipation of the China trade from the oppressive monopoly of the East India Company, and in the disappointment which, no less naturally, succeeded the boom. To some extent also the onerous imposts laid upon the principal article of export—tea—by the British Exchequer might be held responsible for the anomaly; for the English duties were a mechanical dead-weight on the trade, impeding the free play of the other economic factors. There was a practically unlimited supply of tea in China, and a growing demand for it in England, and yet some £2,000,000 in specie was annually sent away from China as the balance of trade. How to commute that amount of silver into tea for the benefit of both countries might

be said to be the problem before the merchants and their Governments.

The only means which appeared to them feasible to effect this object was to lower the British import duty. Among many interesting particulars concerning the actual state of the Chinese trade at that time, we get from the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on "Commercial Relations with China," of 1847, an insight into the difficulties, such as in our day can scarcely be imagined, which stood in the way of any reduction of the tea duties.

On the opening of what was called free trade with China—"free," that is to say, of the East India Company's monopoly—the duty was 96 per cent *ad valorem* on all teas sold at or under 2s. a pound, or 100 per cent on all above that price. These *ad valorem* duties worked iniquitously for both the Government and the merchants, the Customs levying the higher rate when the lower was appropriate, and the merchants redressing the injustice in their own fashion when occasion served. An attempt was made to remedy this regrettable situation by the reduction of tea to three classifications, and the conversion of the *ad valorem* duties into specific duties ranging from 1s. 6d. to 3s. per pound on these classifications. The arrangement was still found unworkable, and the most glaring irregularities were common. The same parcel of tea, absolutely uniform in quality, divided between London and Liverpool, would be assessed in one port on the lower, and in the other on the higher, scale of duties, and the Customs would grant no redress, though the overcharge might be ruinous to the trader.

This impossible state of things was remedied in 1836,

when the duties were converted to one uniform rate of 2s. per pound on all teas. Subsequently 5 per cent was added to this, so that the duty in 1847 was 2s. 2¼d. The object to which the Government inquiry was primarily directed was to gauge the effect on the consumption of tea of the raising or lowering of the duties, on which depended the ultimate retail price. The admission of competition in the Chinese trade in 1834 had the immediate effect of reducing the "laid-down" cost of tea, which promptly reacted upon the consumption of the article in England. But as the import duty remained unaltered, while the prime cost of the tea was much lowered, the Exchequer derived the whole benefit from the increased consumption.

The annual consumption at that time in Great Britain was 1 lb. 10 oz. per head, or 46,000,000 lb. in total, and it was shown that in every instance where the duty was lower the consumption was proportionately greater. In the Isle of Man, where the duty was 1s. per pound, the consumption quickly rose, when the restriction on the quantity allowed to be imported there was removed, to 2 lb. 10 oz. per head. In the Channel Islands it was 4 lb. 4 oz. per head. "In Newfoundland, Australia, and other colonies the consumption is very much larger per head than it is in this country." The Australian colonies have maintained to the present day their pre-eminence as tea-drinkers, their consumption averaging no less than 10 lb. per head. Consumption in Russia and the United States is estimated at a little over 1 lb. per head of the population.

The colonists have always been the most intelligent consumers of the article. Forty years ago they substituted good black teas for the pungent green which had

supplied the wants of the mining camps and primitive sheep stations, and within the last few years they have shown their appreciation of the flavoury Ceylon leaf by taking every year a larger quantity in relative displacement of the rougher qualities which come from India. The "geographical distribution" of the taste for tea presents some rather curious facts. In the United Kingdom, for example, dealers find that Irish consumers demand the best quality of tea. The United States remained faithful to their green tea long after that description was discarded in Australia; and even when black tea came to be in part substituted, it was not the Ceylon or Chinese Congou, but the astringent Oolong kinds, such as are so largely supplied from Japan, which met the taste of American consumers.

The cost price of tea had been so much reduced by the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly that the fixed rate of duty, instead of being equivalent, as it had been when originally fixed, to 100 per cent on the value, was estimated to average 165 per cent on Congou tea, which was much beyond what the Legislature intended when the tariff was decided; for while they reckoned on getting a revenue of £3,600,000, the increase in the quantity had been so considerable that the yield of the duty had risen to £5,000,000. The arguments and the evidence in favour of reducing the duties were unanswerable from every point of view. Yet the utmost which the advocates in 1847 seem to have hoped for was that it might be reduced to 1s. per pound, which they considered would entail a temporary loss to the revenue. But we see in our day that the Government draws nearly £4,000,000 from the article on a tariff rate of 4d.

per pound, while the consumption per head of population has risen to 6 lb., or a total of 235,000,000 lb. per annum.

While the mercantile community were thus straining after means of developing the tea trade from China there were causes at work, of which they seemed to have no suspicion, which have completely revolutionised that trade, reducing China to a quite secondary position as an exporter. Among the witnesses examined before the Committee of 1847 there was one who may almost be said to have held the fate of the Chinese tea trade in his hands, though probably he himself was unaware of it. This was Mr Robert Fortune, curator of the Physic Gardens at Chelsea, who had travelled in some of the tea districts of China as agent of the Horticultural Society of London, being also commissioned by the East India Company to investigate the processes of the growth and manufacture of tea in China, and to bring to India seeds and plants as well as skilled workmen to manipulate the leaves. The idea of cultivating tea in India had long been entertained by the Company. The plant itself had been found indigenous in Upper Assam twenty years before Fortune's day, but no practical notice was taken of the discovery until 1834, when the Government of India resolved to attempt the culture of the leaf. The scheme received its first embodiment in a Minute of Lord William Bentinck, the first Governor-General of India,[1] in 1834. The plan he laid down was to "select an intelligent agent, who should go to Penang and Singapore and in conjunction with authorities

[1] His predecessors had been governors of Fort William in Bengal.

and the most intelligent of Chinese agents should concert measures for obtaining the genuine plant, and actual cultivators." The state of affairs in China at the time did not favour the prosecution of such an enterprise. The native resources of India, however, began at once to be utilised. The Assam Company, the pioneer of tea-culture, was established in 1839, and continues its operations to our own day. After the treaty of peace and the successful establishment of trade at the new ports in China, Lord William Bentinck's ideas were realised in the two missions of Fortune, who succeeded in conveying to India nearly 20,000 plants from both the black and green tea countries of Central China. Although, judging from subsequent experience, India might by her unaided efforts have developed this great industry, yet it can hardly be doubted that the enterprise of the practical Scottish gardener applied the effective stimulus which raised tea-growing to the rank of a serious national interest. Hybridisation between the imported Chinese plants and those of indigenous growth proceeded actively, no less than one hundred varieties being thus produced. Planters now consider that the native plant would have served all their purposes without any intermixture, but probably nothing short of practical experience would have persuaded them of this.

The vicissitudes of tea-growing in India have been so sharp that they would form of themselves an interesting episode of industrial history. Mania and panic alternated during the experimental stages of the enterprise, with the inevitable result of wholesale transfers of property, so that of the early

pioneers comparatively few were destined to enjoy the ultimate reward of their sacrifices. Difficulties of many kinds dogged the steps of the planters, among these being the unsatisfactory land tenure and the supply of labour. The mortality among the imported coolies was for many years so heavy that the Government was eventually obliged to interfere with severe regulations, which were imposed in 1863. These and other difficulties being successfully grappled with, the prosperity of the industry flowed as smoothly as the Niagara river below the Falls, until the supply of tea from India and Ceylon had completely swamped that from the original home of the trade.

The supplanting of Chinese by Indian tea in the markets of the world — for even Russia is now an importer of the latter—is an interesting example of the encroachment of Western enterprise on the ancient province of Eastern habits. These are of course only general terms, for from all such comparisons Japan must be either excluded or classed rather among the foremost of the progressive nations than among her nearest geographical neighbours. When tea-cultivation was once shown to be "payable" in British Indian territory the energy of the Western people was quickly brought to bear on the industry, and through several cycles of success and failure, and over the dead bodies, so to speak, of many pioneers, the production available for and distributed in the English market has steadily grown from nothing up to 154,000,000 lb. per annum.

The cultivation of tea was introduced at a much later period into Ceylon, where it most opportunely took the place of coffee, which had been ruined by disease, and

already the deliveries of tea from that island press hard on that from India itself, having reached 90,000,000 lb., or more than half of the Indian supply. The rate of progress in Ceylon has been most remarkable. In 1883 the most experienced residents in the island considered themselves sanguine in predicting that the export of tea would eventually reach the total of 20,000,000 lb.—it being at that time under 1,000,000 lb. While the products of India and Ceylon have thus been advancing by leaps and bounds, the import from China has dwindled down to 29,000,000 lb.,—about one-tenth part of a trade of which forty years ago she held an easy monopoly.

How has such a gigantic displacement been brought about? Primarily, no doubt, from the vigorous following up of the discovery that tea could be profitably grown in India. But beyond that it is a victory of race over race, of progress over stagnation, of the spirit of innovation and experiment over that of conservative contentment. The Indian planters have made a personal study of all the conditions of tea-culture, have selected their plants, invented machinery to do all that the Chinese have done for centuries by manipulation, have put ample capital into the enterprise, and used the utmost skill in adapting their product to the taste of their customers. Moreover, they have by dint of advertising all over the world, attending exhibitions, and many other devices, forced their commodity into markets which would never have come to them. There was, on the other hand, no one interested in the success of Chinese tea-growers, whose plantations are in the interior of the country, subdivided into garden-plots, with no cohesion among their owners for aggressive

purposes. For though the Chinese can and do combine, it is usually in a negative sense, to obstruct and not to promote action, whereas the tea-growers of India have shown examples of intelligent co-operation of the aggressive and productive kind, not wasting power in seeking to impede rivals, but devoting their whole energies to the prosecution of their own business. And they have their reward.

The short-sightedness of the Government has no doubt contributed to the decline of the Chinese tea trade, through the excessive duties of one kind and another which they have continued to levy on the article from the place of growth to the port of shipment. It is fair to remember, however, that their exactions bear most heavily on the low grades, which, notwithstanding, continue to be shipped in quite as large quantities as is desirable in the interest of consumers; while the superior qualities, which are quite able to bear the taxes, have almost ceased to be imported into Great Britain, the whole supply finding its way to Russia. That country has long been celebrated, and justly so, for the excellence of its tea, for which fantastical reasons are wont to be given. The true reason is very simple. Russian merchants purchase the fine Chinese teas for which no market can now be found in England, the public taste having run so exclusively on the product of India and Ceylon that a cup of good Chinese tea has become a luxury reserved for those who have facilities for obtaining the article outside the ordinary channels of trade.

II. SILK.

Balance of trade adjusted by Shanghai silk trade—China the original silk country—Silk chiefly exported from Canton—Advantages of the new port of Shanghai—Disease attacks the silkworm in Europe—Shanghai supplies the deficit—Efforts in Italy and France to obtain healthy seed from China and Japan—Disease overcome by M. Pasteur—Renewed prosperity of the European producers shared by the Chinese.

Within six years of the time when the merchants of England were earnestly seeking a remedy for the crying evil of the balance of trade against China, the whole difficulty had disappeared through the operation of natural causes. The great factor in bringing about the change was the rapid growth of the trade of Shanghai, and more particularly the large exportation of raw silk from that port. "The noble article," as the Italians fondly call it, already in 1853 represented a larger value than the tea exported; the turn of the tide had come; the balance of trade had shifted; and in a very few years silver flowed into the country more copiously than it had ever flowed out.

Of all the materials of commerce silk is perhaps the most classical. A fibre so lustrous, so pure, and so durable, has been the desire of all nations ancient and modern, and the peculiar interest excited by its humble origin enveloped the subject in myths and legends during the earlier intercourse between Europe and Asia. China was known to the ancients as the cradle of sericulture, deriving, in fact, from its most famous product the name Serica, by which it was known to the Greeks and Romans. There is not a silk-producing country in the world which is not

directly or indirectly indebted to China for the seed of the insect, if not also for the introduction of the white mulberry-tree, upon the leaves of which the caterpillar is fed. Though rivals have sprung up in many countries both in Europe and in Asia, China has not lost its reputation, or even its pre-eminence, as a producer of the article.

The vicissitudes of the silk trade and cultivation would afford more varied interest than the comparatively simple annals of the displacement of tea. Though the subject falls outside the scope of the present work, the changes that have taken place in Chinese commerce cannot be intelligently followed without some reference to the animated competition which has been going on for more than forty years among the great silk-producing countries. The first in rank among these was Italy, France following at a considerable distance. The wants of Europe had been mainly supplied during centuries by the product of these countries, India and the Levant and some others contributing also their share. Japan had been growing silk for her own use during all the time that intercourse with the rest of the world was prohibited by severe laws, and she came later into the field as an exporter.

The quantity obtained from China previous to the opening of the five ports was all derived from the southern provinces, and was exported from Canton. In nothing was the pre-eminence of the new port of Shanghai over its older rival destined to be more marked than in the development of the silk trade. Its position within an easy canal journey of the richest silk-growing districts in the whole empire gave to the northern port advantages which were promptly turned

to account in co-operation between the foreign and the native merchants, resulting before many years in the growth of a healthy and most satisfactory trade. The supply of the article having up to that time been regulated by the home demand, the entry of an outside customer had a very stimulating effect upon the Chinese growers. Some years elapsed before the product of the newly opened districts could be fully tested and appreciated by the manufacturers in Europe. This time was well employed by the Chinese cultivators and traders in maturing their arrangements for bringing larger supplies to the foreign market, suited to the requirements of the new purchasers, as far as they were understood. The supply and demand had progressed evenly, admitting of good profits to both sides, until a stage was reached when the trade and cultivation were both ready to respond to a new stimulus, and just then the new stimulus was applied.

Disease began to attack the silkworms in Europe; the production of Italian and other silk became precarious, and inadequate to the demands of the manufacturing trade. Into the vacuum thus created supplies from China were ready to pour in, and highly remunerative prices awaited them. The export from Shanghai for the year 1856 was very large, and the result encouraged growers and native and foreign merchants to put forth still greater efforts in the following year, when the shipments from that port reached 90,000 bales, worth probably £10,000,000 sterling. These shipments, thrown on the market during the money panic of 1857, resulted disastrously, but the impetus given to the trade continued to be felt during many subsequent years.

The Italians in the meanwhile, driven to their wits' end to save so valuable an industry, tried first to obtain healthy seed from China and Japan. The first experiments being unsuccessful, the eggs having hatched during the voyage, steamers were specially chartered and carefully fitted up with conveniences for preserving the precious commodity. Experiment was also made of sending the seed by the caravan route through Siberia to save the risk of premature incubation. In fact, Jason's quest of the Golden Fleece was scarcely characterised by more varied adventures than that of the Italians—the French also joining to a certain extent—after a healthy breed of silkworm. After many years of anxious and almost desperate efforts, some success was obtained in introducing Chinese and Japanese seed into Europe; but the produce of the exotic seed also in time became liable to attacks of the parasite, and it was not till science came to the aid of the cultivators that the true remedy was finally applied, and an important item in the national wealth of Southern Europe was saved. It was M. Pasteur who eventually furnished the means of detecting in the egg the germ of the destructive parasite; so that by sorting out the infected eggs and destroying them the race was purified. Thus the way was opened for the restoration of European culture to more than its pristine prosperity; for the many valuable lessons which the cultivators learnt in the school of their adversity have stood them in good stead now that fortune has again smiled upon them.

Notwithstanding the revival of European silk-culture, the silks of China and Japan and other Eastern countries still hold their own in the Western markets,

and continue to form an important constituent of the export trade of the Far East.[1] The European markets to which they are consigned are no longer indeed English, but French, German, American, and others, the last forty years having witnessed a revolution in the silk industries of Great Britain, and a virtual transference of the old industries of Spitalfields, Norwich, Macclesfield, and other districts to her manufacturing rivals.

III. OPIUM.

The largest and most interesting Chinese import—Peculiarities of the trade —Nominally contraband—But openly dealt in—Ships anchored in the Canton river—Or near the trading-ports—Wusung—Opium cargoes discharged into old hulks before entering Shanghai port—Importance of the opium traffic as a factor in foreign intercourse—The opium clippers—The opium market liable to much variation—Piracy—The clippers were armed—Occasionally attacked—Anomalous position—Alcock's aversion to the opium traffic—His reasons—Experience at Shanghai modifies his opinion—The trade being bound up with our Indian and Chinese commerce—No attempt to stop it could do other than aggravate the mischief—Still wishes to see the trade modified or abolished—Despatch to Sir J. Bowring—His desire to devise some scheme—His last proposal of 1870—Ambiguous attitude of the British Government—Inheritors of the East India Company's traditions—These forbad the carrying of opium in their ships—Question of legalising the traffic—1885 Chinese Government trebles the import duty and asks the help of the Hongkong Government for its collection.

The most interesting constituent of trade in China has always been opium, especially since the product of British India was so much improved and stimulated by the Government as practically to supersede in the China market the demand for the production of other countries.

[1] Eastern countries send to Europe half of the whole consumption of the West—China yielding 35 per cent to 40 per cent of the entire supply, Japan 12 per cent.

The value of the opium imported exceeded that of all other articles, the figures being returned at $23,000,000 and $20,000,000 respectively for the year 1845. As the exports of Chinese produce were at that time estimated at $37,000,000, it is evident that opium played a most important part in the adjustment of the balance of trade; and as it came from India and the returns from it had to go thither, opium and raw cotton, which also came from India, formed the pivot of exchange. As the opium was paid for in silver and not by the barter of produce, it was natural to charge it with the loss of the silver which was annually shipped away from China, and which was assumed to reach the amount of £2,000,000 sterling, though that seems to be an exaggeration.

The trade in this commodity differs from all ordinary commerce in the conditions under which it has been carried on, and in the sentiments which have grown up concerning it. Until the treaty made by Lord Elgin in 1858 the importation of opium had been for many years nominally contraband, while yet the trade in it was as open as that in any other commodity and was as little interfered with by the Government. Laxity and connivance being the characteristics of Chinese officialdom, there would be nothing extraordinary even in the official patronage of a traffic which was forbidden by the State, so that it would not be safe to infer from the outward show what the real mind of the responsible Government was on that or any other subject. The necessity of saving appearances, an object always so dear to the Chinese heart, necessitated a special machinery for conducting the trade in opium. Before the war, as has been

already said, the ships carrying the drug anchored at certain rendezvous in the estuary of the Canton river, where they delivered their goods on the order of the merchants who were located in Canton or Macao. The vessels also made excursions up the coast, where they had direct dealings with the Chinese, the master acting as agent for the owners. And when the northern ports were opened, after the treaty of Nanking, the opium depot ships were stationed at convenient points on the coast in the vicinity of the trading-ports. The most important of these stations was at Wusung, on the Hwangpu river, nine miles by road from Shanghai. There were sometimes a dozen, and never less than half-a-dozen, hulks moored there, dismantled, housed-in, and unfit for sea. The supply was kept up in the earlier days by fast schooners and latterly by steamers, which in the period before the treaty of 1858 discharged their opium into these hulks without surveillance of any kind, and then proceeded up the river to Shanghai with the rest of their cargo, which, though often consisting of but a few odd packages, was taken charge of by the custom-house with the utmost punctilio, while the valuable cargo of opium was ignored as if it did not exist.

The opium trade was a ruling factor in the general scheme of foreign intercourse and residence in China. The postal communication, for example, on the coast and between India and China was practically dependent on it; for, being a precious commodity, it could afford to pay very high charges for freight, and the opium clippers could be run regardless of expense, as will be more fully described in the Chapter on "Shipping."

The high value of the article influenced the conduct of the trade in a variety of ways, one in particular being that the vessels carrying it had to go heavily armed. The coast of China before the war and after swarmed with pirates, to whom so portable an article as opium offered an irresistible temptation. The clippers on the coast were usually small schooners from 100 to 200 tons burthen, and, though with their superior sailing powers they could always take care of themselves in a breeze, they would have been helpless in a calm unless prepared to stand to their guns. It was sometimes alleged by those opposed to the traffic that these vessels were little better than pirates themselves, inasmuch as they were forcing a trade prohibited by the laws of the empire, and were armed to resist the authorities. The opium-carriers were not unfrequently attacked by pirates, sometimes captured and destroyed by them; but there never seems to have been any interference or complaint on the part of the Government, even when prompted thereto by British consuls. Nevertheless it was an anomalous state of things, though one far from unusual in the first third of the century, that European vessels should ply their trade armed like privateers.

The attitude of Consul Alcock towards the opium trade was, from the earliest days of his consulship in Foochow until his final departure from China in 1870, one of consistent aversion, so decided, indeed, that in some of the arguments adduced in his Foochow reports against the trade the conclusion somewhat outran the premisses, as he in after years

acknowledged by marginal notes on those earlier despatches:—

A trade prohibited and denounced alike as illegal and injurious by the Chinese authority constitutes a very anomalous position both for British subjects and British authorities, giving to the latter an appearance of collusion or connivance at the infraction of the laws of China, which must be held to reflect upon their integrity and good faith by the Chinese.

No small portion of the odium attaching to the illicit traffic in China falls upon the consular authorities under whose jurisdiction the sales take place, and upon the whole nation whose subjects are engaged in the trade; and the foundations of the largest smuggling trade in the world are largely extended, carrying with them a habit of violating the laws of another country.

The opium is of necessity inimical and opposed to the enlargement of our manufacturing trade.

That which has been said of war may with still greater force apply to the illicit traffic in opium, "It is the loss of the many that is the gain of the few."

Whichever way we turn, evil of some kind connected with this monstrous trade and monopoly of large houses meets our eye.

In order to do justice to the agents in the traffic, he adds in the same report on the trade for 1845—

While the cultivation and sale of opium are sanctioned and encouraged for the purposes of revenue in India, and those who purchase the drug deriving wealth and importance from the disposal of it in China are free from blame, it is vain to attempt to throw exclusive opprobrium upon the last agents in the transaction.

These were the impressions of a fresh and presumably unprejudiced mind taking its first survey of the state of our commercial intercourse with China. They were reflections necessarily of a somewhat ab-

stract character, formed on a very limited acquaintance with the actualities of a trade which did not yet exist in Foochow. A few years' experience at the great commercial mart of Shanghai widened the views of the consul materially, and showed him that there was more in this opium question than meets the eye of the mere philosopher. A confidential report on the subject made in 1852 treats the matter from a more statesman-like as well as a more business-like point of view. In that paper he does more than deplore the evil, and while seeking earnestly for a remedy, fully recognises the practical difficulties and the danger of curing that which is bad by something which is worse.

The opium trade [he observes in a despatch to Sir John Bowring] is not simply a question of commerce but first and chiefly one of revenue—or, in other words, of finance, of national government and taxation—in which a ninth of the whole income of Great Britain and a seventh of that of British India is engaged.

The trade of Great Britain with India in the year 1850 showed by the official returns an export of manufactures to the value of £8,000,000, leaving a large balance of trade against that country. A portion of the revenue of India has also to be annually remitted to England in addition, for payment of the dividends on Indian stock and a portion of the Government expenses. These remittances are now profitably made *viâ* China, by means of the opium sold there; and failing this, serious charges would have to be incurred which must curtail both the trade and the resources of the Indian Exchequer.

In China, again, scarcely a million and a half of manufactured goods can find a market; yet we buy of tea and silk for shipment to Great Britain not less than five millions, and the difference is paid by opium.

A trade of £10,000,000 in British manufactures is therefore at stake, and a revenue of £9,000,000—six to the British and three to the Indian Treasury.

Which of these is the more important in a national point of view,—the commerce, or the revenue derived from it? Both are, however, so essential to our interests, imperial and commercial, that any risk to either has long been regarded with distrust and alarm, and tends to give a character of timidity to our policy and measures for the maintenance of our relations with China—the more disastrous in its results, that to the oriental mind it is a sure indication of weakness, and to the weak the Chinese are both inexorable and faithless.

That the opium trade, illegal as it is, forms an *essential element*, interference with which would derange the whole circle of operations, must be too apparent to require further demonstration.

Reference to the practical details of the colossal trade in which it plays so prominent a part shows that it is inextricably mixed up with every trading operation between the three countries, and that to recognise the one and ignore the other is about as difficult in any practical sense as to accept the acquaintance of one of the Siamese twins and deny all knowledge of his brother.

No attempt of the British Government to stop or materially diminish the consumption could possibly avail, or be otherwise than productive of aggravated mischief to India, to China, and to the whole world, by giving a motive for its forced production where it is now unknown, and throwing the trade into hands less scrupulous, and relieved of all those checks which under the British flag prevent the trade from taking the worst characters of smuggling, and being confounded with other acts of a lawless and piratical nature affecting life and property, to the destruction of all friendly or commercial relations between the two races. It is also sufficient to bear in mind that it is a traffic, as has been shown, which *vitalises* the whole of our commerce in the East; that without such means of laying down funds *the whole trade* would languish, and its present proportions, colossal as they are, soon shrink into other and insignificant dimensions; that the two branches of trade are otherwise so *inextricably interwoven*, that no means could be devised (were they less essential to each other) of separating them. And finally, although Great Britain has much to *lose*, China in such a quixotic enterprise has little or nothing to *gain*.

Notwithstanding all these weighty considerations, Mr Alcock never swerved in his desire to see "the opium trade, with all its train of contradictions, anomalies, and falsifying conditions," modified, if not done away with. In a careful despatch to Sir John Bowring dated May 6, 1854, reviewing our whole position in China, he thus expresses himself:—

> Any modification for the better in our relations must, I believe, begin here. We must either find means of inducing the Chinese Government to diminish the evil by legalising the trade, or enter the field of discussion . . . with a stone wall before us. . . . The legalisation would go far to diminish the obstacle such an outrider to our treaty creates; but far better would it be, and more profitable in the end in view of what China might become commercially to Europe, America, and to Great Britian specially, if the Indian Government abandoned their three million sterling revenue from the cultivation of opium, and our merchants submitted to the temporary prejudice or inconvenience of importing silver for the balance of trade.

Nearly twenty years afterwards we find Mr Alcock still engaged on the problem how to diminish the trade in opium without dislocating both the trade and finance of India, his last act on retiring from China in 1870 having been to propose a fiscal scheme of rearrangement by which the opium trade might undergo a process of slow and painless extinction.[1]

The attitude of the British Government towards the opium trade has always been ambiguous. Succeeding to the inheritance of the East India Company as the great growers of opium, they had to carry on its

[1] It is worth notice that this consistent opponent of the opium trade during fifty active years should have come under the ban of the Anti-Opium Society in England when the discussion of this important question degenerated into a mere polemic.

traditions. These had led the Company in its trading days into some striking inconsistencies, for though they cultivated the poppy expressly for the China market, employing all the intelligence at their command to adapt their product to the special tastes of the Chinese, they yet refused to carry a single chest of it in their own ships which traded to China. By this policy they thought they could exonerate themselves in face of the Chinese authorities from participation in a trade which was under the ban of that Government. The importation of the drug was thus thrown upon private adventurers, and whenever the subject was agitated in Canton and Macao, none were so warm in their denunciations of the trade as the servants of the East India Company. This was notably the case with Captain Elliot, who, after leaving the Company's service and becoming representative of the Crown, never wearied in his strictures on the opium traffic.

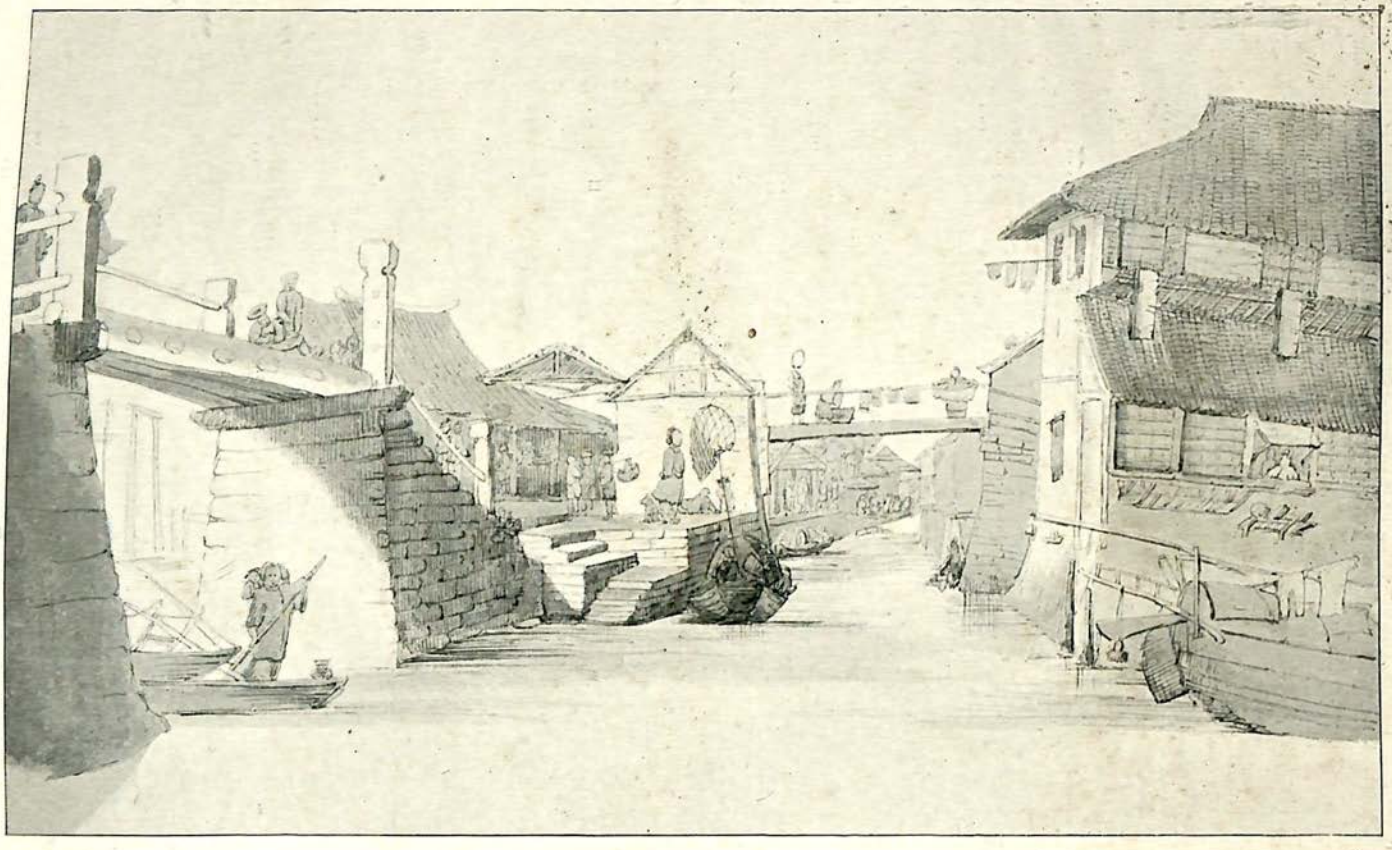
The question of legalising the traffic had frequently before been considered by the Chinese Government,[1] and it was fully expected that this was the policy which would prevail in Peking in 1837. The pendulum swung to the opposite side, namely, that of prohibition, and legalisation was not adopted until 1858. But once adopted, the idea made such progress that in 1885 the Chinese Government made a successful appeal to the British Government to be allowed to treble the import duty authorised in 1858, and that the Colonial Government of Hongkong should render them special assistance in collecting it.

[1] Import duty had been regularly levied on opium for a hundred years, the prohibition of importation having been decreed after 1796 (Eitel).

IV. CHINESE EXPORTS.

Efforts of the consuls to stimulate trade—Alcock's work at Foochow—His despatches—Exhibition of 1851—Exhibits of Chinese produce sent by Alcock.

The continuous efforts made by the consuls in the first decade after the treaty to stimulate the action of foreign merchants in laying hold of all the opportunities offered to them for extending their connections with the Chinese trade ought not to be passed over without notice. It was the burden of Consul Alcock's labours while in Foochow to gather information from every source, to digest it as well as he was able, and to lay it before his countrymen; and if he, in his despatches to the plenipotentiary, sometimes reflected on what seemed to him the apathy and want of enterprise of the merchants, that must be set down to a laudable zeal to make his office fruitful of benefit to his country. The same spirit animated his proceedings in Shanghai. The demand made for exhibits for the Great Exhibition of 1851 found Mr. Alcock and his lieutenant Parkes eager to supply samples of Chinese products of every kind likely to be of commercial interest. On applying to the mercantile community of Shanghai for their co-operation in collecting materials, he found them not over-sanguine as to the results of such an effort, and in his despatch of December 1850 to the plenipotentiary he remarks that "the British and foreign residents in Shanghai appeared to feel that the impossibility of gaining access to the great seats of manu-



VILLAGE ON THE CANALS.

facture or the producing districts for raw material placed them in too disadvantageous a position to do justice either to themselves or the resources of the empire, which could only be very inadequately represented, and in a way more calculated to mislead than instruct." "The conclusion," he goes on to say, "at which the mercantile community has arrived has gone far to paralyse all exertion on my part." Nevertheless, with the restricted means at his disposal, he set to work to collect specimens of Chinese produce and industry and to transmit them to the Board of Trade for the use of the Commissioners. Of objects of art he sent a great variety in bronze, inlaid wood, porcelain, soapstone, and enamels, and the fancy articles which have since acquired such great reputation in the world that dealers in European and American capitals send out commissions every year to make extensive purchases. Colours used by the Chinese for dyeing purposes in twenty shades of blue, silk brocades, and many valuable products of the Chinese looms, were well represented, and the commoner utensils, such as scissors, needles, and razors, some of which were within the last few years specially recommended in consular reports to the notice of English manufacturers, as if the suggestion were made for the first time. Of raw material, samples were sent of hemp, indigo, and many other natural products; and when it is considered how eager the British mercantile community appeared to be to increase their importation of Chinese produce—be it tea, silk, or any other commodity—in order to balance the export trade, it is interesting to observe that in those early days a number of articles of export were

described and classified, with an account of the districts of their origin, which have only taken their place in the list of exports from China within the last twenty years or so. These were sheep's wool of six different descriptions, and camels' hair, which are now so extensively dealt in at the northern ports of China. Perhaps these articles were not seen in bulk by foreigners until after the opening of the new ports in 1861, and it is worthy of remark that even after this discovery, and sundry experimental shipments, many years elapsed before the special products of Northern China became recognised articles of foreign trade. These now include straw plait, sheep's wool, goats' wools, goats' skins, dogs' skins, camels' hair, horses' tails, pigs' bristles, and a number of other articles of export which might perfectly well have been brought to the foreign market of Shanghai even before the opening of the northern ports. What was wanted was the knowledge that such products were procurable and the organisation of a market for their disposal in China, in Europe, and the United States. To stimulate inquiry into these matters was an object of the consular reports of the early days, and the fact that the seed then sown seemed to have been buried in sterile soil for thirty years affords a reasonable prospect that from the more advantageous basis on which commercial men now stand still larger developments of international commerce may be reserved to future adventurers.

V. BRITISH EXPORTS.

Slow increase—Turn of the scale by the Shanghai silk trade—Consequent inflow of silver to China—Alcock's comment on the Report of Select Committee—His grasp of the true state of affairs.

This department of trade presents little else but a record of very slow improvement, with some rather violent fluctuations due to obvious and temporary causes. In the first year after the treaty of Nanking the value of shipments to China from the United Kingdom was £1,500,000; in 1852, £2,500,000; in 1861, £4,500,000, decreasing in 1862 to £2,300,000, and rising in 1863 to £3,000,000; after which period it steadily increased to £7,000,000, at which it has practically remained, with the exception of two or three years between 1885 and 1891, when it rose to £9,000,000.

The theory of the merchants who gave evidence before the Committee of 1847, that an increase in the exports from China was all that was needed to enable the Chinese to purchase larger quantities of manufactured goods, has by no means been borne out by the subsequent course of trade. For although the Chinese exports have been greatly extended since then, that of silk alone having more than sufficed to pay for the whole of the imports from abroad, there has been no corresponding increase in the volume of these importations. What happened was merely this, that the drain of silver from China, which was deplored on all sides up till about 1853, was converted into a steady annual inflow of silver

to China.[1] Consul Alcock, having been requested by her Majesty's chief superintendent of trade to make his comments on the Report of the Select Committee, dealt comprehensively with the whole question of the trade between Europe, India, and China, and evinced a wider grasp of the true state of the case than the London merchants had done. In a despatch dated March 23, 1848, the following passages occur :—

Nearly the whole of the evidence furnished by the witnesses on our trade is calculated to mislead those imperfectly acquainted with the details. The existence of this relation [the importation of opium and raw cotton from India] is kept out of sight, and conclusions are suggested which could only be maintained if the Indian imports into China did not form a part of our commerce, and did not come in direct competition with the import of staple manufactures.

To counteract as far as may be in my power the erroneous tendency of the partial evidence which the Blue-Book contains on this part of the subject, I have ventured for the information of her Majesty's Government to bring forward such facts and inferences as seem to me to place in the strongest light the fallacy of the argument mainly insisted upon before the Committee—viz., that we have only our own consumption of tea to look to as indicating the extent to which we can exchange our manufactures—that this is the only limit of our imports into China. But imports of what? Not certainly of cotton and woollen goods, for we already export of tea and silk from China to the value of some four millions sterling, and cannot find a profitable market for manufactured goods to the amount of two millions; and a somewhat similar proportion, or disproportion rather, may be traced during the monopoly of the East India Company, during the free-trade period prior to the commencement of hostilities, and since the treaty. Say that from a

[1] During the last two decades important factors—such as foreign loans, armaments, and the like—have so influenced the movements of gold and silver that they bear no such simple relation to the "balance of trade" properly so called as was formerly the case.

reduction of the tea duties or any other cause we *double* our *exports* from China as we have already done since 1833, from what data are we to infer that in this same proportion the export into China of British manufactures will increase; or in other words, that for every additional million of tea there will be an equivalent value expended upon our cotton fabrics?

The anticipated result is contradicted by all past experience in China, and a moment's reflection must show that the essential elements have been overlooked. 1st, That there is a balance of trade against the Chinese of some $10,000,000, which must adjust itself before any increase of our exclusively British imports into China can be safely or reasonably expected, for which an additional export of 20,000,000 lb. of tea and 10,000 bales of silk is required. 2ndly, That if such increase of our exports hence restored the balance of trade to-morrow, the proportion in which an increased import of our goods would take place must depend upon the result of a competition of cotton goods against opium and raw cotton—all three objects in demand among the Chinese; and the proportion of each that may be taken under the assumed improvement depends upon the relative degree of preference exhibited by our customers for the different articles. The two latter have proved formidable rivals to our manufactures, nor is there any reason to anticipate beneficial change in that respect.

The argument, therefore, that the only limit to our imports into China is the consumption of tea and silk in Great Britain, if meant to be applied, as it appears to be in the evidence, exclusively to British imports—that is, to cotton and woollens —is fallacious, and can only be sustained by dropping the most important features of the import trade, by treating opium and raw cotton as though they had neither existence nor influence upon our British staple trade.

The influence of this mode of reasoning is calculated to be the more mischievous that it comes from gentlemen of practical mercantile information, and purports to suggest a remedy for an evil which is, in truth, of our own creating, and must recur as often and as certainly as the same causes are in operation. The trade in China during the last three years has been a losing, and in many instances a ruinous, trade, not because the English do not drink more tea, or the Chinese do not find it convenient to wear more cotton of our manufacture, but simply

because in such market the supply has not been carefully regulated by an accurate estimate of the probable demand. Our merchants at home have unfortunately been led by such reasoning as I have quoted to assume that in proportion as we purchase more tea the Chinese would lay out more money in cotton goods, and that the one might be taken as a true estimate of the other. Hence came shipments after the treaty so disproportioned to the actual wants or state of demand in the Chinese market that an immediate glut, with the consequent and necessary depreciation in price, followed. Nor did the evil end here: a return was of necessity to be made for this enormous over-supply of goods, hence more tea was shipped than the legitimate demand of the English markets would have suggested or justified, and at the other end of the chain the same depreciation and ruinous loss was experienced. . . .

I have submitted in this and the preceding Reports my strong conviction that other conditions than a mere increase in our exports hence are essential. Of these I have endeavoured to show the principal and most important are access to the first markets, the removal of or efficient control over all fiscal pretexts for restricting the free circulation of our goods in the interior and the transit of Chinese produce thence to the ports, and, finally, the abolition of all humiliating travelling limits in the interior, which more than anything else tends to give the Chinese rulers a power of keeping up a hostile and arrogant spirit against foreigners, and of fettering our commerce by exactions and delays of the most injurious character.

The conditions of the trade were, in fact, simpler than the merchants had imagined. The Chinese entered into no nice estimates of the balance of imports and exports, but purchased the goods which were offered to them so far as they were adapted to their requirements—and there is no other rule for the guidance of foreign manufacturers in catering for the great Chinese market.

VI. NATIVE TRADE.

Inter-provincial trade—Advantages of the employment of foreign shipping — China exports surplus of tea and silk — Coasting-trade — Salt.

The great reservoir of all foreign commerce in China is the old-established local inter-provincial trade of the country itself, which lies for the most part outside of the sphere of foreign interest excepting so far as it has come within the last forty years to supply the cargoes for an ever-increasing fleet of coasting sailing-ships and steamers. This great development of Chinese commerce carried on in foreign bottoms was thus foreshadowed by Mr Alcock as early as 1848:—

> The disadvantages under which the native trade is now carried on have become so burdensome as manifestly to curtail it, greatly to the loss and injury of the Chinese population, enhancing the price of all the common articles of consumption: any measures calculated, therefore, to exempt their commerce from the danger, delay, and loss attending the transport of valuable produce by junks must ultimately prove a great boon of permanent value, though at first it may seem the reverse.
>
> In a political point of view the transfer of the more valuable portion of their junk trade to foreign bottoms is highly desirable, as tending more than any measures of Government to improve our position by impressing the Chinese people and rulers with a sense of dependence upon the nations of the West for great and material advantages, and thus rebuking effectually the pride and arrogance which lie at the root of all their hostility to foreigners.
>
> In a commercial sense the direct advantage would consist in the profitable employment of foreign shipping to a greater extent: it would also assist the development of the resources of the five ports—more especially those which hitherto have done

little foreign trade. I have entered into some details to show how the carrying trade may work such results, particularly in reference to sugar, which promises to pave the way at this port to large shipments in this and other articles for the Chinese.

A more effective blow will be given to piracy on the coast by a partial transfer of the more valuable freights to foreign vessels than by any measures of repression which either Government can carry out, for piracy will, in fact, cease to be profitable. . . .

A further extension of the trade between our Australian settlements and China, and our colonies in the Straits with both, may follow as a natural result of any successful efforts in this direction,—the addition of a large bulky article of regular consumption like sugar alone sufficing to remove a great difficulty in the way of a Straits trade. . . .

If this can be counted upon, I think it may safely be predicated that at no distant period a large and profitable employment for foreign shipping will be found here totally exclusive of the trade with Europe.

It has been said with regard to tea that the quantity sold for export is but the overflow of what is produced for native consumption, and to silk the same observation would apply. Essentially a consuming country, it is the surplus of these two articles that China has been able to afford which has constituted the staple of export trade from first to last. It is an interesting question whether there may not be surpluses of some other Chinese products to be similarly drawn upon. If the foreign trade has been distinguished by its simplicity, being confined to a very few standard commodities, such cannot be predicated of the native trade, which is of a most miscellaneous character. It is impossible to give any statistical account of the coast and inland traffic of China. Any estimate of it would be scarcely more satisfactory than those which are so loosely made of the population. In the early days, when the ports

opened by the treaty of 1842 were still new ports, great pains were taken by the consuls to collect all the information they could respecting purely Chinese commerce, which they not unnaturally regarded as the source whence the material of an expanded foreign trade might in future be drawn. Especially was this the case at Foochow under the consulship of Mr Alcock and the assistantship of his energetic interpreter, Parkes. We find, for instance, among the returns compiled by that industrious officer of three months' trading in 1846, the quantities and valuations of over fifty articles of import and as many of export given in great detail: imports in 592 junks of 55,000 tons, and of exports in 238 junks of 22,000 tons. Of the sea-going junks he gives an interesting summary, distinguishing the ports with which they traded and their tonnage, with short abstracts of the cargoes carried. These amounted for the year to 1678 arrivals from twenty different places, and 1310 departures for twenty-four places; and this at a port of which the consul wrote in 1847, "No prospect of a British or other foreign trade at this port is apparent in the very remotest degree." Every traveller in every part of China is astonished at the quantity and variety of the merchandise which is constantly on the move. It is this that inspires confidence in the boundless potentialities of Chinese commerce, which seems only waiting for the link of connection between the resources of the empire and the enterprise of the Western world.

Besides the sea-borne trade of which it was possible to make these approximate estimates, there is always in China an immense inland trade; and at the time when piracy was rampant on the coast, and before the

aid of foreign ships and steamers was obtained, all the goods whose value enabled them to pay the cost of carriage were conveyed by the inland routes, often indeed from one seaport to another, as, for instance, between Canton and Foochow, Ningpo, Shanghai, &c.; and it is still by the interior channels that much of the trade is done between Shanghai and the provinces to the north of it, which would appear, geographically speaking, to be more accessible from their own seaports.

The relation of the Government to the inter-provincial trade is, in general terms, that of a capricious tax-gatherer, laying such burdens on merchandise as it is found able and willing to bear. The arbitrary impositions of the officials are, however, tempered by the genius of evasion on the part of the Chinese merchant, and by mutual concession a *modus vivendi* is easily maintained between them.

The item of trade in which Government comes into most direct relation with the trader is the article salt, which is produced all along the sea-coast, and is likewise obtained from wells in the western provinces. Like many other Governments, the Chinese have long treated salt as a Government monopoly. As the manner in which this is carried out illustrates in several points the ideas that lie at the root of Chinese administration, some notes on the subject made by Parkes at Foochow in 1846, and printed in an appendix to this volume, may still be of interest.[1]

[1] See Appendix IV.

CHAPTER XII.

SHIPPING.

The East Indiaman—Opium clippers—Coasting craft—Trading explorations—Yangtze—Japan—Ocean trade—American shipping—Gold in California—Repeal of British Navigation Laws—Gold in Australia—Ocean rivalry—Tonnage for China—Regular traders—Silk—British and American competition—The China clipper—Steam—The Suez Canal—Native shipping—Lorchas.

NEXT in importance to the merchandise carried was the shipping which carried it. That stately argosy, the East Indiaman, was already invested with the halo of the past. Her leisurely voyages, once in two years, regulated by the monsoons, landing the "new" tea in London nearly a year old, and her comfortable habits generally, were matters of legend at the time of which we write. But a parting glance at the old is the best way of appreciating the new. The East Indiaman was the very apotheosis of monopoly. The command was reserved as a short road to fortune for the *protégés* of the omnipotent Directors in Leadenhall Street, and as with Chinese governors, the tenure of the post was in practice limited to a very few years, for the Directors were many and their cognates prolific. So many, indeed, were their privileges, perquisites, and "indulgences" that a captain was expected to have realised an ample independence

in four or five voyages; the officers and petty officers having similar opportunities, proportionate to their rank. They were allowed tonnage space, the captain's share being 56 tons, which they could either fill with their own merchandise or let out to third parties. The value of this, including the intermediate "port-to-port" voyage in India, may be judged from the figures given by one captain, who from actual data estimated the freight for the round voyage at £43 per ton. The captains enjoyed also the passage-money, valued by the same authority at £1500 per voyage. There were other "indulgences," scarcely intelligible in our days, which yet yielded fabulous results. These figures are taken from a statement submitted to the Honourable Company by Captain Innes, who claimed, on behalf of himself and comrades, compensation for the loss they sustained through the cessation of the monopoly. The captain showed that he made, on the average of his three last voyages, £6100 per voyage—of which £180 was pay!—without counting "profits on investments," for the loss of which he rather handsomely waived compensation. £8000 to £10,000 per voyage was reckoned a not extravagant estimate of a captain's emoluments. The Company employed chartered ships to supplement its own, and the command of one of them was in practice put up to the highest bidder, the usual premium being about £3000 for the privilege of the command, which was of course severely restricted to qualified and selected men.

That such incredible privileges should be abused, to the detriment of the too indulgent Company, was only natural. The captains, in fact, carried on a

systematic smuggling trade with Continental ports as well as with ports in the United Kingdom where they had no business to be at all, though they found pretexts, *à la Chinoise*, such as stress of weather or want of water, if ever called to account. The Channel Islands, the Scilly Islands, and the Isle of Wight supplied the greatest facilities for the illicit traffic, and their populations were much alarmed when measures were threatened to suppress it. The inspecting commander reported officially from St Mary's, in 1828, "that these islands were never known with so little smuggling as this year, and the greatest part of the inhabitants are reduced to great distress in consequence, for hitherto it used to be their principal employment."[1] The ships were also met by accomplices on the high seas which relieved them of smuggled goods. What is so difficult to understand about such proceedings is that the Court of Directors, though not conniving, seemed helpless to check these irregularities. Their fulminations, resolutions, elaborate advertisements, and measures prescribed for getting evidence against offenders, bore a curious resemblance to those futile efforts which are from time to time put forth by the Chinese Government, which is equally impotent to suppress illicit practices in its administration. One cause of this impotence was also very Chinese in character. The smugglers had friends in office, who supplied them with the most confidential information.

The East India Company, nevertheless, in one im-

[1] For interesting details of the smuggling organisation which lasted up to the middle of the present century, see 'Smuggling Days and Smuggling Ways,' by the Hon. Henry N. Shore, R.N.

portant respect received value for its money—in the competence of its officers. The greatest pains were taken to secure the efficiency of the service, for the ships were more than mere carriers or passenger-boats. They were maintained on a war-footing, and were manned by thoroughly disciplined crews. Many gallant actions at sea, even against regular men-of-war, stand to the credit of the Indiamen.

But what conceivable freight-money or profits on merchandise could support a trade carried on under such luxurious conditions! It was magnificent, indeed, but it was not business, and no surprise need be felt that the East India Company, while furnishing its employees with the means of fortune, made very little for its shareholders by either its shipowning or mercantile operations. The Company was a standing example of that not uncommon phenomenon, the progressionist become obstructionist, blocking the door which it opened. For many years it had played the part of dog-in-the-manger, keeping individual traders out while itself deriving little if any benefit from its monopoly. Whenever independent merchants succeeded—under great difficulties, of course—in gaining a footing, they invariably proved the superiority of their business methods; and it is to them, and not to the Company, that the development of trade in the Far East is due. English shipowners had constantly agitated for a share in the traffic round the Cape, and there were many Indian-owned ships engaged in the China trade, the Company's ostentatious abstention from carrying the opium which it grew affording this favourable opening for private adventurers.

It is somewhat surprising that the seafaring nations of the world, who were free from the restrictions which so cramped the British shipowners, should have suffered to endure so long a monopoly so baseless as that of the East India Company. The fact seems to prove the general depression of maritime energy in the early part of the century. But succeeding to such a patriarchal *régime*, it is little wonder that the common merchantmen, reduced to reasonable economical conditions, should have reaped a bountiful harvest. The Company's terms left a very handsome margin for shrinkage in the freight tariff, while still leaving a remunerative return to the shipowner. The expiration of the Company's charter, therefore, gave an immense stimulus to the common carriers of the ocean; though, starting from such an elevated plateau of profits, the inducements to improvements in the build and management of ships were not very urgent.

The size of the ships and their capacity for cargo underwent slow development in the first half of the century. The East Indiamen averaged about 1000 tons, some ships being as large as 1300, while those chartered by the Company seem to have run about 500 tons. All were bad carriers, their cargo capacity not exceeding their registered tonnage. In the ordinary merchant service which succeeded large ships were deemed unsuited to the China trade, 300 tons being considered a handy size, until the expansion of trade and necessity for speed combined with economical working forced on shipowners a larger type of vessel.

Of quite another class were the opium clippers, which also in a certain sense represented monopoly in its long

struggle with open trade — the monopoly of capital, vested interests, and enterprise. The clippers, first sailing craft and then steamers, were able by means of the advantages they possessed to prolong the contest into the 'Sixties; indeed the echo of it had scarcely died away when the Suez Canal and the telegraph cable revolutionised the whole Eastern trade at a single stroke. The precious cargoes they carried, and scarcely less valuable intelligence, supplied the means of maintaining the opium-carriers in the highest efficiency. Every voyage was a race, the rivalry being none the less animated for the smallness of the competing field. Indeed, when reduced to a duel, the struggle became the keenest. It was only towards the close of the period that the opium-clipper system attained its highest organisation. The great China houses of Jardine, Matheson, & Co., and Dent & Co., then ran powerful steamers—the former firm chiefly between Calcutta and Hongkong—their time of departure from the Indian port being regulated so as to enable them to intercept the English mail-steamers on their arrival in Singapore, where they received on board their owners' despatches, with which they proceeded at once to Hongkong before the mail-steamer had taken in her coal. They had speed enough to give the P. and O. steamer two days on the run of 1400 miles; and making the land in daylight, they would slip into one of the snug bays at the back of the island at dusk and send their private mail-bag to the merchant-prince to digest with his port, and either lie hidden under the cliffs or put to sea again for a day or two with perhaps a number of impatient passengers on board.

The rival house of Dent & Co. devoted their ener-

gies more especially to the China coast. Their fast steamers would start from Hongkong an hour after the arrival of the Indian and English mail, landing owners' despatches at the mouth of the Yangtze, whence they were run across country to Shanghai. To gain exclusive possession of a market or of a budget of news for ever so brief a period was the spur continuously applied to owners, officers, and men. How the public regarded these operations may be inferred from a note in Admiral Keppel's diary of 1843: "Anonymous opium-clipper arrived from Bombay with only owners' despatches. Beast."

All this of course presupposed a common ownership of ship and cargo, or great liberties, if not risks, taken with the property of other people. In the years before the war this common management of ship and cargo was a simple necessity, for opium had to be stored afloat and kept ready for sailing orders. The 20,000 chests surrendered in 1839 might have been all sent away to Manila or elsewhere had that course of procedure been determined on. Captain John Thacker, examined before the Parliamentary Committee of 1840, being asked what he would have done in case the Chinese had ordered away the opium, answered, "I would have sent mine away to the Malay Islands, to exchange it for betel-nut and pepper. . . . I had a ship at Canton that I could not get freighted with tea, and I intended to send her away with the opium." A kind of solidarity between ship and cargo was thus an essential of the trade at that time, and what originated in necessity was continued as a habit for many years after its economical justification had ceased.

The ambition of owning or controlling ships became

a feature of the China trade, the smaller houses emulating the greater. It seemed as if the repute of a merchant lacked something of completeness until he had got one or more ships under his orders, and the first use the possession was put to was usually the attempt to enforce against all comers a quasi-monopoly either in merchandise or in news. To be able to despatch a vessel on some special mission, like Captain Thacker, had a fascination for the more enterprising of the merchants, which may perhaps be referred back to the circumstance that they were men still in the prime of life.

The passion was kept alive by the inducements offered by a series of events which crowded on each other between the years 1858 and 1861. Before that time the spread of rebellion, the prevalence of piracy, and the general state of unrest and distrust which prevailed among the Chinese commercial classes, threw them on the protection of foreign flags, and the demand for handy coasting craft was generously responded to by all maritime nations, but chiefly by the shipowners of Northern Europe. Such a mosquito fleet was perhaps never before seen as that which flew the flags of the Hanse Towns and of Scandinavia on the China coast between 1850 and 1860; and many a frugal family on the Elbe, the Weser, and the Baltic lived and throve out of the earnings of these admirably managed and well-equipped vessels. The vessels were mostly run on time-charters, which were exceedingly remunerative; for the standard of hire was adopted from a period of English extravagance, while the ships were run on a scale of economy—and efficiency—scarcely then dreamed of in England. A schooner of

150 tons register earning $1500 per month, which was a not uncommon rate, must have paid for herself in a year, for the dollar was then worth 5s. Yet the Chinese also made so much money by subletting their chartered tonnage that foreigners were tempted into the same business, without the same knowledge or assurance of loyal co-operation at the various ports traded with.

The habit of handling ships in this way, whether profitably or not, had the effect of facilitating the despatch of reconnoitring expeditions when openings occurred, and they did occur on a considerable scale within the period above mentioned. The year 1858 was an epoch in itself. It was the year of the treaty of Tientsin, which threw open three additional trading-ports on the coast, three within the Gulf of Pechili, and three on the Yangtze. Of the three northern ports, excepting Tientsin, very little was known to the mercantile community, and the selection of Têng-chow and Newchwang by the British plenipotentiary shows what a change has in the interval come over the relative intelligence of the Government and the merchants; for in those days, it would appear, the Government was as far in advance of the merchants in information about China as the merchants of a later period have been in advance of the Government. These unknown, almost unheard-of, ports excited much interest during the year that elapsed between the signing of the treaty and its ratification. Information about them from Chinese sources was therefore diligently sought after.

Within a couple of miles of the foreign settlement of Shanghai—and it was the same thing in the Ningpo

river — compact tiers of large sea-going junks lay moored head and stern, side to side, forming a continuous platform, so that one could walk across their decks out into the middle of the river. Their masts, without yards or rigging, loomed like a dense thicket on the horizon. Of their numbers some idea may be formed when we remember that 1400 of them were found loaded at one time in 1848 with tribute rice. Of this enormous fleet of ships and their trade the foreign mercantile community of Shanghai was content to remain in virtual ignorance. They traded to the north, and were vaguely spoken of as "Shantung junks" —Shantung then standing for everything that was unknown north of the thirty-second parallel. The map of China conveyed about as much to the mercantile communities on the coast in those days as it did to the British public generally before the discussions of 1898. These junks carried large quantities of foreign manufactured goods and opium to the unknown regions at the back of the north wind, of which some of the doors were now being opened. How was one to take advantage of the opening, and be first in the field? Time must be taken by the forelock, and a certain amount of commercial exploration entered into in order to obtain data on which to base ulterior operations. Accordingly in the spring of 1859, a few months before the period fixed for the exchange of ratifications of the treaty, several mercantile firms equipped, with the utmost secrecy, trading expeditions to the Gulf of Pechili. Their first object was to discover what seaport would serve as the entrepot of Têngchow, since that city, though near enough to salt water to have been bombarded for a frolic by the Japanese navy in 1894,

possessed no anchorage. The several sets of argonauts, among whom was the writer of this book, seeking for such an anchorage, found themselves, in the month of April, all together in the harbour of Yentai, which they misnamed Chefoo, a name that has become stereotyped. Obviously, then, that would be the new port, especially as the bay and the town showed all the signs of a considerable existing traffic. It was full forty miles from Têngchow, but there was no nearer anchorage. The foreign visitors began at once to cultivate relations with the native merchants, tentatively, like Nicodemus, making their real business by night, while the magnificent daylight was employed in various local explorations. These were full of fresh interest, the Shantung coast being the antithesis of the Yangtze delta; for there were found donkeys instead of boats, stony roads instead of canals, bare and barren mountains instead of soft green paddy- or cotton-fields, stone buildings, and a blue air that sparkled like champagne.

Our own particular movable base of operations was one smart English schooner, loaded with mixed merchandise, and commanded by a sea-dog who left a trail of vernacular in his wake. Soon, however, we were able to transfer our flag to a commodious house-boat, of a hybrid type suited to the sheltered and shallow waters of the Lower Yangtze, but not, strictly speaking, seaworthy. Next, a Hamburg barque came and acted as store-ship, releasing the English schooner for more active service. The master of that craft was also a character, full of intelligence, but rough, and the trail of tobacco juice was over all, with strange pungent odours in the cuddy.

Having thus inserted the thin end of the wedge, pegged out mentally the site of the future settlement, and trifles of that sort, the pioneers of commerce waited for the official announcement of the port being opened. Meantime there was the unknown Newchwang to be discovered, at the extreme north-east corner of the Gulf of Liaotung, and for this purpose the boat aforesaid presented a very tempting facility. The trip was accomplished, not without anxiety and detention on the way by stress of weather, and the British flag was shown in the Liao river, to the best of our knowledge, for the first time in May 1859. Many other ports and harbours in the gulf were visited during the summer and autumn. Weihai-wei became very familiar, not as a place of trade, which it never was, but as a convenient anchorage better sheltered than Chefoo. How blind were the pioneers to the destinies of these gulf ports and the gulf itself! How little did they dream of the scenes that peaceful harbour was to witness, the fortifications which were to follow, the Chinese navy making its last desperate stand there like rats caught in a trap; and finally, the British flag flying over the heights!

The treaty of course was not ratified, though the news of the repulse of the British plenipotentiary at Taku only reached the pioneers in the form of tenebrous Chinese rumours with an ominous thread of consistency running through their various contradictions. The most conclusive evidence, however, of the turn affairs had taken was the interference of the officials with the native merchants and people at Chefoo, whom they forbade intercourse with the foreigners, and made responsible for the presence of

the foreign ships. The ships, therefore, had to move out of sight, and it was in this predicament that the harbour of Weihai-wei offered such a welcome refuge.

To put an end to the intolerable suspense in Chefoo the Hamburger was got under weigh and sailed to the westward. On approaching the mouth of the Peiho the situation at once revealed itself: not one English ship visible, but the Russian despatch-boat America, and one United States ship, with which news was exchanged, and from which the details of the Taku disaster were ascertained. This news, of course, knocked all the commercial adventures which had been set on foot in the gulf into "pie." Nothing remained but to wind them up with as little sacrifice as possible, —a process which was not completed till towards Christmas.

The three ports to be opened on the Yangtze stood on quite a different footing. They had not been named, and their opening was somewhat contingent on the position of the hostile forces then occupying the river-banks. The navigation, moreover, was absolutely unknown above Nanking, and it was left to Captain Sherard Osborn to explore the channel and to Lord Elgin to make a political reconnaissance at the same time in H.M.S. Furious, of which cruise Laurence Oliphant has left us such a delightful description. It was not, however, till 1861 that the great river was formally opened by Admiral Sir James Hope. Trade then at once burst upon the desolate scene like the blossoms of spring. On the admiral's voyage up to Hankow, on the 600 miles of stream scarcely a rag of sail was to be seen. Within three months the surface

of the river was alive with Chinese craft of all sorts and sizes. The interior of China had for years been dammed up like a reservoir by the Taipings, so that when once tapped the stream of commerce gushed out, much beyond the capacity of any existing transport. The demand for steamers was therefore sudden, and everything that was able to burn coal was enlisted in the service. The freight on light goods from Hankow to Shanghai commenced at 20 taels, or £6, per ton for a voyage of three days. The pioneer inland steamer was the Fire Dart, which had been built to the order of an American house for service in the Canton river. She was soon followed by others built expressly for the Yangtze, and before long regular trade was carried on. Again the tradition asserted itself of every mercantile house owning its own river steamer, some more than one. Steamers proved a mine of wealth for a certain time. Merchants were thereby enticed into a technical business for which they had neither training nor aptitude, and the natural consequences were not very long delayed.

While on the subject of river steamers, it is interesting to recall that in the beginning English merchants sent their orders for the Yangtze to the United States. The vessels were light, roomy, and luxurious, admirably adapted to their work. In the course of a few years, however, the tables were turned, and the Americans themselves came to the Clyde builders with their specifications, and had their river steamers built of iron. Many economies and great improvements have been made in the construction and management of these vessels since 1861, but we need not pursue the matter into further detail here.

The opening of the Yangtze made a revolution in the tea trade, for the product of Central China, which formerly was carried on men's backs over the Meiling Pass to Canton, could now be brought by water cheaply and quickly to Hankow, which in the very year of its opening became a subsidiary shipping port—subsidiary, that is, to Shanghai, where the ocean voyage began. Before long, however, this great central mart became an entrepot for ocean traffic. To the steamer Scotland, owned by Messrs W. S. Lindsay & Co. and commanded by Captain A. D. Dundas, R.N., belongs the honour of being the first ocean steamer to ascend the river to Hankow, and thereby opening the interior of China to direct trade with foreign countries. And within two years a sailing vessel was towed up the river and loaded a cargo of the new season's tea for London.

But the most interesting item in the budget of that *annus mirabilis* 1858 was the opening of Japan to foreign intercourse. To contemporaries it was the discovery of a new world of activity, intelligence, beauty —an elaborate civilisation built on strange foundations. Could the veil of the future have been withdrawn for the men of that day, how their imaginations would have been staggered before the unrolling of an epic transcending in human interest all the creations of fiction! But before all things there was trade to be done with awakening Japan, nobody knew what or how; while the seductive novelties of the life, the art, the scenery, and the laws contested the supremacy of the claims of mundane commerce. Here was an ideal opening for the commercial pioneer. What kind of merchandise would the Japanese buy, and what had

they to sell, were naturally the first objects of inquiry. For this purpose ships with trial cargoes had to be sent hither and thither to explore, and there was work here for the kind of handy craft that had had such a run on the China coast. By their means was the foreign trade of the Japanese ports opened to the world. The clipper ship Mirage, laden with Manchester goods in which the late Sir John Pender was interested, lay several days in Shanghai waiting orders to proceed on an experimental trip to Japan as early as 1858, but the owners wisely concluded that the venture would be premature.

So far we have dealt only with what may be considered as the outriders of the host, and the subject would be very incomplete without giving some account of the main body, the common carriers of the international trade, filling by far the most important place in the economical system of the countries of their origin. While endeavouring to confine our attention as much as possible within the limits of the field embraced by the China, developing later into the Far Eastern, trade, the progress of the merchant shipping employed therein cannot be fully understood except from a standpoint more cosmopolitan. For the history of the Eastern shipping is intimately bound up with events which were taking place in other and widely-separated quarters of the globe in the middle of this century. Within the space of three to four years events happened of a world-moving character, forming the basis of the commercial revolution that has set its mark on the second half of the century. The catholicity of commerce and its unfailing inventiveness in supplying human wants were wonderfully illustrated at this time.

Events so different in their nature as the potato blight in one hemisphere, the production of gold in another, and the abrogation of the Navigation Laws in England, combined within these few years to revolutionise the world's shipping trade.

In the year 1847 the world was first startled by the definitive announcement of gold discoveries in California, and four years later a similar phenomenon appeared in Australia. Coincidently with these events the first Universal Exhibition of the industries of all nations was held in Hyde Park, and whatever we may think of the relative influence of that and of the gold discoveries, there can be but one opinion as to the splendid advertisement which the Exposition lent to the golden promise of the Antipodes and the East Pacific. Thenceforth the whole world, industrial, commercial, and financial, beat with one pulse, a fact which has received constantly accumulating illustrations until the present day. It was as if the sectional divisions of the globe had been united in one great pool, forced to maintain a common level, subject only to disturbances of the nature of rising and falling waves. The new supplies of gold, by making money plentiful, inflated the price of all commodities and stimulated production in every department of agriculture and manufacture; but the time-worn yet ever-new passion for wealth, disseminated afresh throughout the civilised world, probably acted more powerfully on the material progress of mankind than the actual possession of the new riches. The rapid peopling of desert places created a demand for the necessaries of life—food, clothing, housing, tools, and appliances of every description. In a word, the tide

of humanity, rushing to America for food and to the goldfields for the means of buying it, made such calls on the carrying powers of the world as could not be satisfied without a stupendous effort.

Of all nations the most responsive to the stimulus was beyond doubt the United States: it was there that shipbuilding had been making the most gigantic advances. The total tonnage afloat under the American flag bade fair at one time to rival that of Great Britain. The attention of the American shipping interest had been particularly directed towards China, where excellent employment rewarded the enterprise, not only in the ocean voyage out and home, but also in the coasting trade, which included the portable and very paying item of opium. English merchants and shipowners did not, of course, resign their share in the China trade without a struggle; but they were fighting on the defensive, and under the disadvantages incidental to that condition of warfare. Every improvement they introduced in the efficiency of their ships in order to cope with the advances of their rivals was promptly followed by a counter-move which gave the wide-awake Americans again the lead. About 1845 an important step forward was taken in the despatch of a new type of vessel from the United States to China which surpassed in speed the newest and best English ships. The British reply to this was the building of clippers, initiated in 1846 by Messrs Hall of Aberdeen. The first of these, a small vessel, having proved successful in competing for the coasting trade of China, larger ships of the clipper type were constructed, and so the seesaw went on.

Then emigration to the United States, chiefly from

Ireland, made demands on the available tonnage which was indifferently met by vessels unfit for the work, and the American builders were not slow to see the advantage of placing a superior class of vessel on this important Atlantic service.

Following close on this salutary competition—East and West—came one of the epoch-making events just alluded to, the gold-mining in California, which more decisively than ever threw the advantage in the shipping contest on the side of the United States. The ocean was the true route to California for emigrants and material; but the voyage was long, and impatience of intervening space being the ruling temper of gold-seekers, the shortening of the time of transit became a crying want for the living cargoes, and scarcely less for the perishable provisions which the new ships were designed to carry. Speed, comfort, and capacity had therefore to be combined in a way which had never before been attempted. The result was the historical American clipper of the middle of the century, beautiful to look on with her cloud of white cotton canvas, covering every ocean highway. These were vessels of large capacity, carrying one-half more dead-weight than their registered tonnage;[1] built and rigged like yachts, and attaining a speed never before reached on the high seas. The pioneer of this fine fleet made the voyage from New York to San Francisco, a "coasting voyage" from which foreign flags were excluded, and returned direct in ballast, the owners realising a handsome profit on the outward passage alone. The Americans not only had the Californian trade practi-

[1] The modern ship carries 70 to 75 per cent of dead-weight over her registered tonnage, and of weight and measurement combined about double.

cally in their own hands, but were prompt to turn the advantage which that gave them to profitable account in the competition for the trade of China. The ships, when empty, sailed across the Pacific, loading, at Canton or Shanghai, tea and other produce for London or New York, the three-cornered voyage occupying little more time than the direct route to China and back to which English ships were then confined. As the American clippers earned on the round about a third more freight than English ships could obtain on their out-and-home voyage, competition bore very hard on the latter. Larger and finer ships were constantly being added to the American fleet until they almost monopolised the trade not only between New York and San Francisco, but also between China and Great Britain. British shipping was, in fact, reduced to the greatest depression, the falling off in the supply of new tonnage being almost commensurate with the increase of that of the United States. A phenomenal advance was recorded also in the entries of foreign ships into British ports to the displacement of British-owned tonnage.

It was at this most critical juncture that the heroic remedy of repeal of the Navigation Laws in 1850 consigned British shipowners to absolute despair; for if they could not hold their own while protected by these laws, how were they to survive the removal of the last barrier from the competition of the whole world? But the darkest hour was, as often happens, that before the dawn. The withdrawal of protective legislation proved the turning-point in the fortunes of the British shipowner. In part it was an efficient cause, inasmuch as it threw the shipowner entirely on his

own resources for his existence. He had to look to improvements in the efficiency and economy of his ships, for which it must be admitted there was considerable room. There were many conservative prejudices to be got rid of—that one, for example, which held it dangerous to have less than one foot in breadth to four in length, the adherence to which rendered British ships oval tubs compared with the American, which had for many years been proving the superiority of five and even six to one. The English axiom, which had so long resisted plain reason, had at last to yield to necessity. And so with many other antiquated conditions, including the quality and qualifications of masters, officers, and seamen.

The exertions made in Great Britain to improve merchant shipping were at once stimulated and immeasurably assisted by the gold discoveries in Australia, an island in the South Pacific more absolutely dependent on sea communication than San Francisco on the American continent had been. It was, moreover, in British territory, where no exclusive privileges could be enjoyed, and where competition was entirely unfettered. Of course the clipper fleet of the United States was prepared to do for Australia what it had done so well for California; but the prospect of the carrying trade between Great Britain and her colonies falling into alien hands aroused the spirit of the English to make a supreme effort to at least hold their own, if not to recover lost ground.

The seven seas soon became alive with rival clipper ships of great size and power, and the newspapers chronicled the runs they made to Australia and Cali-

fornia in days, as they now record the hours consumed on steamer voyages across the Atlantic. Ancient barriers seemed to be submerged, and fusion of the ocean traffic of the world into one great whole opened the way to a new dispensation in the history of merchant shipping. Tonnage was tonnage all the world over, and became subject to the comprehensive control in which the gold and silver produced in distant countries was held by the great financial centres. But the ocean telegraph was not yet, and for twenty years more many gaps were left in the system of ocean communications, whence resulted seasons of plethora alternating with scarcity in particular lines of traffic.

There was probably no trade in which the overflow of the new output of tonnage was more quickly felt than in that of China. It became a common custom for vessels of moderate size which had carried goods and emigrants to Australia and California, whence no return cargoes were at that period to be had, to proceed to India or China in ballast—"seeking." This was a source of tonnage supply which the merchants resident in those countries had no means of reckoning upon, though such a far-reaching calculation might not be beyond the powers of a clear head posted at one of the foci of the commercial world. An example may be quoted illustrative of the local tonnage famine which occasionally prevailed during that transition period. An English ship arrived in ballast at Hongkong from Sydney in 1854. The owner's local agent, or "consignee," recommended the captain to proceed at once north to Shanghai, where, according to latest advices, he

would be sure to obtain a lading at a high rate of freight. The cautious skipper demurred to taking such a risk, and refused to move unless the agent would guarantee him £6, 10s. per ton for a full cargo for London. This was agreed. The ship reached the loading port at a moment when there was no tonnage available and much produce waiting shipment, and she was immediately filled up at about £7 or £8 per ton. It fell to the lot of this particular vessel, by the way, to carry a mail from Hongkong to Shanghai, the P. and O. Company's service being then only monthly, and no other steamer being on the line. It was just after the outbreak of the war with Russia. About a couple of days after the departure of the Akbar—for that was her name—when it was considered quite safe to do so, a resident American merchant, unable to contain himself, boasted of having sent by this English vessel the despatches of the Russian admiral under sealed cover to a sure hand in Shanghai. The recipient of this confidence, like a good patriot, reported the circumstance promptly to the governor of the colony, and he to the senior naval officer, who with no less promptitude ordered a steam sloop, the Rattler, to proceed in chase of the ship. The pursuit was successful; the Russian despatches were taken out and brought back to Hongkong, where they were submitted to the polyglot governor, Sir John Bowring.

Another incident of the same period will show how it was possible for a bold operator to exploit the tonnage of the world on a considerable scale without the aid of the telegraph, or even of rapid communication by letter. One such operator in Lon-

don, reckoning up the prospective supply and demand of tonnage throughout the world, foresaw this very scarcity in China of which we have just given an illustration. He thereupon proceeded to charter ships under various flags and engaged in distant voyages to proceed in ballast to the China ports, there to load cargoes for Europe. The wisdom of the operation was far from clear to the charterer's agents in China when they heard of ships coming to them from the four quarters of the world at a time when freights were low, with but little prospect of improvement, so far as they could see; but their outlook was circumscribed. Though as the ships began to arrive the difficulty of providing profitable freightage seemed to presage the ruin of the venture, yet subsequent arrivals justified the prevision of its author by earning for him highly remunerative freights. The tide had really risen as it had been foreseen; but it soon receded, and before the last charter had been fulfilled the time-factor, which is fatal to so many well-laid schemes, interposed, and probably caused the early profits to be swallowed up in the final losses.

The bulk of the China traffic, however, was carried not by these erratic outsiders but by the regular traders, which loaded in London, Liverpool, or New York with manufactured goods, coal, and metals, and returned from China with tea, silk, and other produce. It must have been a profitable business, for the average freight homeward in the 'Forties and 'Fifties seems to have been about £5 per ton; and if we allow even one-third of that for the outward voyage, it would give the shipowner somewhere about £7 for the round

voyage, which was accomplished with ease within the twelve months. It must be remembered, however, that the expenses of running were proportionately high on the small vessels which were then in the trade. In the course of time, when speed and facilities of despatch at home and abroad had been further improved, the clippers from London took in Australia in the outward voyage by way of filling up the time until the tea crop was brought to market.

When the great increase in the export of silk took place a special rate was paid on it to favourite ships on account of its high value. But though this precious article could afford, when necessary, extreme rates of freight, its total bulk was too small—about one-tenth of that of tea—to affect seriously the general carrying trade of China. A certain quantity was regularly shipped by the "overland route"—that is, by P. and O. Company's steamers to Suez, and thence by rail to Alexandria, to be there reshipped for its ultimate destination, Marseilles or Southampton. But the capacity of the steamers was so small that only a *pro rata* allotment of space was made to applicants, and the freight charged for it was at the rate of £25 per ton. Under exceptional conditions one sailing ship in the year 1856 carried a silk cargo of 6000 bales, valued at £750,000 sterling, which was said to be the largest amount ever ventured, up to that time, in any merchant vessel. It was so unexpectedly large that the shippers were unable fully to cover their risk by insurance. A singular fatality attended the outset of this voyage, showing the fallibility of human judgment even under the most favourable circumstances. The commander of this ship had been perhaps the most successful in the China trade,

and it was the extraordinary confidence that was placed in his judgment that induced the merchants to intrust to his care merchandise of such enormous value. Though much impressed with the sense of personal responsibility for its safety, he was yet tempted by a fine starlit night to break ground from the anchorage at Shanghai and drop down the river to Wusung, where he touched on the well-known bar, and was passed by the outward-bound mail-steamer the following morning. The ship was of course reported "on shore," and so the letters ordering insurance which the mail-steamer carried were rendered useless. The master, though the ship had lain but a few hours on soft mud, dared not proceed to sea with such a valuable cargo without examining the ship's bottom. To do this he had to be towed back to Shanghai, fourteen miles by river, discharge, strip off the copper, replace it, reload the cargo, and recommence the voyage. It proved much the longest she had ever made, and there was great anxiety among the merchants, especially among those of them who were only partially insured. But as fate would have it, while the ship was on the high seas her cargo was growing in value, the silk famine in Europe having in the mean time clearly declared itself; so that what with the delay of a month or two at the start and several weeks more on the passage, a time was gained for sufficient profit to accrue on the silk to lay the foundation of several respectable fortunes, and the commander, to whose error of judgment the result was due, was received in London with acclamation and with substantial gratuities from some of the fortunate owners of his cargo. The lucky craft was the Challenger, Captain Killick, which had distinguished herself in racing against the

American clipper Nightingale in 1852 and 1863, and was the first sailing-vessel to load tea at Hankow in 1863,—a historic ship.

During the time of the deepest gloom in shipping circles, consequent on the repeal of the Navigation Laws, at a meeting where the ruin of the industry was proclaimed in chorus by the shipowners present, one man had the courage to rise up and stem the current of depression. "The British shipowners have at last sat down to play a fair and open game with the Americans, and, by Jove! we will trump them," were the words of Mr Richard Green, the eminent shipbuilder of Blackwall, as quoted by Mr W. S. Lindsay in his 'History of Merchant Shipping.' Mr Lindsay adds that Mr Green was as good as his word, for shortly after he built, to the order of Mr Hamilton Lindsay, a China merchant, the ship Challenger, of 600 or 700 tons, expressly to match the American Challenge, more than double her size, and thought to be the fastest ship then afloat. Though the two never met, the performances of the English, whether for speed or for dry carrying, quite eclipsed the American ship. It was with another competitor that the pioneer Blackwall clipper tried conclusions, and the circumstance suggests a somewhat whimsical association of the evolution of the China clipper with the Great Exhibition. A ship of exquisite model and finish had been built in America for the purpose of conveying visitors to that great gathering. She was put into the China trade, for which by her size she was well suited. Whether by prearrangement or not, she met the Challenger in 1852 in Shanghai, where they were both laden with tea simultaneously. Immense excitement was aroused, which took the usual

form of heavy wagers between the respective partisans on the issue of the race to London. It was a close thing, as sportsmen say, the British ship coming in two days ahead of her rival. Dissatisfied, as the owner of a yacht or of a racehorse is apt to be with his defeat, certain changes were made by the owners of the Nightingale in her equipment for the next year's voyage. The race was again run from the same port, on the same conditions—and with the same result, only still more in favour of the English ship.

A general excitement about such a trivial matter as the relative speed of two ships was only to be accounted for by the awakening consciousness of the significance of the English shipping revival which was then beginning. The interest extended much beyond the circle of those directly concerned. The deck of a mail steamer, to take an instance, became suddenly animated as the signals of a sailing-vessel were read out. Speaking a ship at sea was no such unusual occurrence, but when the name of Challenger was passed round, passengers and crew rushed to the side, gazing intently on the shapely black hull and white sails reflecting the morning sun. She was in the Straits of Malacca, on her way back to China to run her second heat. A young man among the passengers betraying ignorance of the cause of the commotion felt as small as if unable to name the last Derby winner. The world at that time seemed to have grown young. Imagination was directed to a dawn gilded with promise which the sequel has surely not belied!

Thus the China Sea became a principal battle-ground whereon the struggle for ascendancy between the ships of Great Britain and the United States was most

strenuously fought out. It was, as Mr Green said, a fair and open contest, alike creditable to both sides, and an unmixed benefit to the world at large. The energy of the English shipping interest was thoroughly aroused, and the shipowners and shipbuilders of Scotland came speedily to the front. In a few years after the issue was joined between the United States and Great Britain, the shipbuilders of the latter country found a potent auxiliary in iron, which began to be used for sailing-ships.[1] The vessel that led the way in this innovation, combining great speed with the other conditions of success, was the Lord of the Isles, Captain Maxton, of Greenock, which distinguished herself by beating two of the fastest American clippers of twice her size in the run from Foochow to London in 1856. The gradual introduction of steam on long voyages, which followed the free use of iron, was also to the advantage of the British competitors; and thus from a combination of favouring circumstances and dogged efforts to turn them to account, the ascendancy of British shipping was finally established.

In sketching the performances of these vessels we have somewhat anticipated the advent of that famous fleet of tea clippers which commanded the traffic of the Far East for something like fifteen years. For the beginnings of that struggle we have to go back to the

[1] The American and British clippers were originally built of wood sheathed with metal. After that came trial of iron ships coated with tallow, but finally at the climax of the sailing clippers' notable races they were all of composite construction—*i.e.*, iron frames planked with wood and sheathed with yellow metal. This type of vessel (now out of date) was the essential feature of the fastest sailing China clippers. Thereupon followed the iron and steel steamship as the permanent carrier, and the white-winged argosies were no more!

year 1851, when the Leith clipper Ganges raced two Americans, the Flying Cloud and Bald Eagle, from China to London, finishing up with an interesting tack-and-tack contest up Channel from Weymouth, the English ship passing Dungeness six hours ahead. At that period the odds in mere numbers were so overwhelming against the English vessels that such occasional victories as the above were calculated to inspire the builders with courage to persevere. The Aberdeen clippers, Stornoway, Chrysolite, and Cairngorm, worthily followed the London-built Challenger in disputing the prize of speed with the best of their American contemporaries; and after the race of 1856, won, as has been mentioned, by the iron ship Lord of the Isles of Greenock, the American flag was practically eliminated from the annual contest. Competition, however, by no means slackened on that account, but rather increased in intensity. Past achievements opened the eyes of those interested to the possibilities of indefinite improvement in the build, rig, and equipment of ships, so that the idea took root and became a passion. Each year brought forth something new, giving birth in the following year to something still newer, until a type of ship was evolved which seemed to be the acme of design and execution. British clippers raced against each other for the blue ribbon of the ocean with as great zest as they had ever done when other flags were in the field.

The competition for speed received a great stimulus from the opening of Foochow as a regular tea-shipping port in 1856. The port had been hindered by official restrictions from enjoying its natural advantages at an earlier period, and it was mainly due to the enterprise

of the leading American house that these obstacles were at last removed and the produce of the Bohea hills diverted to its proper outlet. The event marked an epoch in the tea trade; for Foochow being so much closer to the plantations than the other two ports, it became possible to put on board there the first growth of the season with a prospect of landing the new teas in London a couple of months earlier than the trade had been accustomed to. It may be mentioned as one of the curiosities of conservatism that this very circumstance was used to the commercial prejudice of shipments from the new port. It was revolutionising the established routine of the trade, would interfere with the summer holidays, and it was gravely argued that October was the very earliest time when the London buyers could be induced to attend to the tea-market. But the fragrance of the new tea was irresistible in dispersing such cobwebs. So far from its coming too early to market, the best shipbuilders in the world were soon engaged in constructing ships that would accelerate the arrival of the new tea by as much as a couple of days. And so hungry was the trade that special arrangements were made to facilitate the brokers obtaining samples to sell by before the vessel passed Gravesend, and he would be an obscure grocer who was not able to display in his shop window a tea-chest bearing the name of the clipper on the day following her arrival in the dock. The annual tea-race from Foochow thus became one of the events of the year. Premiums were paid to the winner, and sliding scales of freight were in course of time introduced, graduated by the number of days on passage.

No better proof could be adduced of the high excel-

lence of the ships as well as of the good seamanship of their commanders than the exceeding closeness of the running on that long ocean voyage of twelve thousand miles. Several times it happened that vessels starting together would see nothing of each other during the hundred days' passage until the fog lifting in the Downs would reveal them close together, from which point the winning of the race depended on the pilot or the tug. Of the great race of 1866 Mr W. S. Lindsay, from whose valuable work on Merchant Shipping we have drawn freely for these details, says: "This race excited extraordinary interest among all persons engaged in maritime affairs. Five ships started—the Ariel, Taeping, Serica, Fiery Cross, and Taitsing. The three first left Foochow on the same day, but lost sight of each other for the whole voyage until they reached the English Channel, where they again met, arriving in the Thames within a few hours of each other." Very fast passages continued to be made after that time. The Ariel and Spindrift raced in 1868, and the Titania made a quick run in 1871; but Mr Lindsay awards the palm to the Sir Lancelot and Thermopylæ as "the two fastest sailing-ships that ever traversed the ocean." The former vessel, 886 tons register, made the run from Foochow to London in ninety days in 1868, and an interesting fact is recorded by the owners of that fine ship bearing on the propelling power of sails. Many experienced navigators had during the clipper-racing entertained misgivings as to the value of the excessive amount of sail and the heavy rig which were deemed necessary to the equipment of a clipper. The ships, they said, "buried themselves under the press of canvas." Writing seven

years after the performance just mentioned, the owner of the Sir Lancelot said: "After the mania for China clipper-sailing I had 8 feet cut off from all the lower masts, and reduced the masts aloft and the yards in proportion. Yet with that (and no doubt a proportionately reduced crew) she maintained her speed undiminished." This was not an uncommon experience.[1]

It is not to be supposed that the produce of China or the imports into the country were all carried by clipper ships. Theirs was a special service reserved for the most valuable produce and for the first few weeks of the season. After that fitful fever the trade of the year settled down to what may be called daily-bread conditions, when ships with moderate speed, large capacity, and frugally sailed, made steady and substantial profits for their owners. It is a commonly accepted maxim that the race—for profits, at all events—is not always to the swift. It was a saying of Mr Green, whose firm owned a large fleet of ships in the Australian and Indian trade, that in his balance-sheet for the year he found that his slow ships had paid for his fast ones. Nor did this economic rule lose its validity when steam came to supersede sail.

The clippers proper had not had a clear run of fifteen years when steamers began to trespass on their preserves. The possibility of a successful steam

[1] Mr James MacCunn of Greenock says that all these racing clippers, which were practically the same size, carried double crews, numbering about thirty-three all told, equal to that of a 2500-tons merchantman of to-day. The Sir Lancelot, besides the shingle ballast below the tea, carried 100 tons fitted kentledge in the limbers stowed between skin and ceiling, whereby great "stiffness" was ensured—a factor of much value in beating down the China Sea against the monsoon, and at other times in "carrying on" under a heavy press of canvas.

voyage round the Cape began to be proved in 1864, and was demonstrated in 1866, when Mr Alfred Holt of Liverpool first established his "blue-funnel" line, beginning with the Ajax, Achilles, and Agamemnon. But though sailing clippers were displaced, the sporting element in the China trade was not extinguished. The opening of the Yangtze revived the interest in early arrivals of tea by bringing the "black leafs" of Hunan and Hupeh to the sea nearly as soon as the "red leafs," whose outlet was Foochow. The produce of the central provinces up till 1861 was conveyed by a slow and expensive route, a considerable portion of it on the backs of porters, to Canton. Hankow when opened became at once the entrepot for these teas, and sea-going ships began to load their cargoes in the very heart of the Chinese empire. For some years there had been two sets of races—one from Foochow and one from Hankow—which took the wind out of each other's sails, and the sport became somewhat stale.

It was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and the consequent improvements in the construction of steamships, that gave its full value to the Yangtze as a trade route. For then ocean steamers loaded at Hankow with all the advantages of the short route and convenient coaling-stations, and the old excitement of the Foochow racing was revived under a still higher pressure. Every year witnessed some new design for combining the maximum cargo and coal stowage with the maximum speed, so that new tea, which but a few years before was landed in November, now came to market early in July. The last great race occurred in 1883 between the Glenogle and Stirling Castle. By

that time Indian tea was rapidly gaining the ascendant in the great consuming marts, displacing the Chinese article, which could no longer afford the prestige of being carried by steamers built and run regardless of expense. Thenceforth all Far Eastern produce found an everyday level; merchandise was carried to and fro by regular lines, with measured intervals of sailing, all the year round, freights were fixed by common agreement, and the trade assumed a character of an omnibus traffic on a large scale.

The Suez Canal produced an immense lateral extension of trade with China by bringing the Black Sea, Mediterranean, and North Sea ports into direct communication with the ports of the Far East. The Russian volunteer fleet, composed of very large and swift steamers, each capable of conveying 2000 troops, carried tea direct from Hankow to Odessa. Trade with Marseilles and Genoa was developed by British and German enterprise as well as by the Messageries Maritimes of France. Antwerp, Bremen, and Hamburg became the terminal ports for important lines of steamers. The mercantile navy of Japan had not risen into general notice during the earlier time with which we are principally concerned, and it would deserve a treatise by itself.

By a process of natural selection native shipping in China and Japan has been extensively superseded by foreign, and an immense dislocation of capital has in consequence taken place. The effect of this has been severely felt on the China coast, especially in such large shipping ports as Taku, Shanghai, and Ningpo, where there were in former days large and prosperous

shipowning communities. The disturbance has probably been much less marked in Japan, owing to the greater agility of the people in adapting themselves to inevitable changes. Certain it is that in both countries there is still a large junk fleet employed in the coasting trade, being protected against foreign as well as steam competition by their light draught and their privilege of trading at ports not opened to foreign trade.

The temptation to evade the prohibition of foreign flags led in former days to sundry bizarre effects on the coast of China. The natives, finding it to their advantage to employ foreign vessels, exercised their ingenuity in making them look like Chinese craft. This would at first sight appear no easy matter, seeing that the Chinese junks carried no yards and their hulls were of a construction as different from that of a modern ship as was possible for two things to be which were intended for the same purpose. The junks possessed certain qualities conducive to buoyancy and safety, such as water-tight bulkheads, which at once strengthened the hull and minimised the danger of sinking. But their sailing properties, except with the wind "free," were beneath contempt. Their weatherly and seaworthy qualities commended vessels of foreign construction to the Chinese traders, while the talisman of the flag was deemed by them a protection against pirates, and perhaps also, on occasion, against official inquisition. Probably what on the whole the native owner or charterer would have preferred was that his ship should pass for foreign at sea and for native in port. To this end in some cases resort was had to hermaphrodite rigging, and very generally to two projecting boards, one on each side of the figurehead,

bearing the staring Chinese eye, such as the junks south of the Yangtze carry. The open eye on the ship's bow was to enable the Chinese port officials to close theirs to the unauthorised presence of strangers, and thus everything was arranged in the manner so dear to the Chinese character.

In the south of China the advantage of the flag was sought without the foreign appearance of the vessel. The foreign flag was hoisted on native-built small craft, a large fleet of which hailed from Macao under Portuguese colours, and were from time to time guilty of great irregularities on the coast. The Chinese of Hongkong, British subjects born and bred, registered their vessels and received colonial sailing letters, renewable at frequent intervals, as a check on bad behaviour. With these papers short trips were made along the south coast, and a local trade was carried on in the estuary of the Canton river. These vessels of about 100 or 200 tons burthen were called "lorchas," of which we shall hear more in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRADERS.

I. FOREIGN.

Their relations to their official representatives—And to the trading interests of their own countries—Their unity—High character—Liberality—Breadth of view.

In the preceding portions of this narrative it has been shown how much the character of the principal officials on both sides influenced the progress of events. There was, however, yet another factor which contributed in a lesser degree and in a different manner to the general result which ought not to be entirely omitted from consideration, and that was the personal qualities and traditional characteristics of the two trading communities, foreign and Chinese. It was they who created the subject-matter of all foreign relations, and stood in the breach in all the struggles between foreign and native officials. It was their persons and their fortunes which were ever at stake; it was they who first felt the shock of disturbance, and were the first to reap the fruits of peace.

The relation of the foreign mercantile community to their official representatives was not always free from friction, because the same high authority which en-

joined on the officials the protection of the persons and the promotion of the interests of the lay community empowered them also to rule over these their *protégés*, and to apply to them an arbitrary discipline in accordance with what they conceived to be the exigencies of the time. Duty in such circumstances must often have assumed a divided aspect, and rules of action must frequently have been put to a severe strain; nor is it surprising that, owing to these peculiar relationships, the resident communities should not have been able on all occasions to see eye to eye with the agents of their Governments.

In their national and representative character the China merchants were wont at different crises to have moral burdens laid on them which did not properly fit their shoulders. They were little affected by the shallow moralism of the pulpit, which, taken literally, would have counselled general liquidation and the distribution of the proceeds among the poor, leaving the common creditor out of account; but official sermons also were on certain occasions preached to, or at, the merchants, implying some obligation on their part to sacrifice individual advantage to the greater good of the greater number. Were there no other answer to such altruistic monitions, it would be sufficient to plead that under such theories of duty commerce could not exist, and its political accessories would become superfluous. No road to commercial prosperity has been discovered which could dispense with the prime motive for the exertion which makes for progress—to wit, individual ambition, cupidity, or by whatever term we choose to designate the driving power of the complex machine of civilised life. Mammon is, after all, a divinity whose

worship is as universal as that of Eros, and is scarcely less essential to the preservation of the race. Nor is it by collective, but by strictly individual, offerings that these deities are propitiated, and the high purposes of humanity subserved. It is no reproach, therefore, to the China merchants that they should have seized every opportunity for gain, totally irrespective of the general policy of their country. It was not for them to construe portents, but to improve the shining hour. And if it should at any time happen that the action of private persons, impelled by the passion for gain, embarrassed a diplomatist in his efforts to bring about some grand international combination, the fault was clearly his who omitted to take account of the ruling factor in all economic problems. The trade was not made for Government policy, but the policy for the trade, whose life-blood was absolute liberty of action and a free course for individual initiative. The success of British trade as a whole could only be the aggregate of the separate successes not otherwise attainable than by each member of the mercantile fraternity performing his own part with singleness of purpose. Nothing certainly could ever justify any trader in foregoing a chance of gain for the sake of an ideal benefit to the community, even if it were likely to be realised. A distinction must be drawn between the tradesman and the statesman. Though their functions may sometimes overlap, their respective duties to the State are of a different though complementary character.

To the charge which from time to time has been levelled at the China merchants, that they were too narrow and too selfish, it may be plausibly replied that, on the contrary, they were if anything too

broad; for their individual interests were not so bound up with general progress as are the interests of colonists in a new country, where co-operation is essential. Progress meant, to the China merchants, the admitting of the flood of competition, which they were in no condition to meet. The general interests of the country required the opening of new markets; in a lesser degree the interests of the manufacturing section required the same thing; but the interests of the merchants, albeit they appeared to represent their country and its industries, were in fact opposed to expansion. Yet so strong in them was the race instinct for progress that their private advantage has oftentimes actually given way to it, so that we have seen throughout the developments of foreign intercourse with China the resident merchants placing themselves in the van in helping to let loose the avalanche which overwhelmed them and brought fresh adventurers to occupy the ground.

Nor has the relation of the merchants, even to the operations in which they were engaged, been always clearly understood. Although they personified their national trade in the eyes of the world, the merchants were never anything more than the vehicles for its distribution, having no interest in its general extension, though a powerful interest in the increase of their individual share. The productions which provided the livelihood of many thousands of people in China, and perhaps of a still larger number in Great Britain and other manufacturing countries, did not concern them. A percentage by way of toll on merchandise passing through their warehouses was the limit of their ambition. A clear distinction should

therefore be drawn between the merchant and the producer or manufacturer; on which point some observations of Wingrove Cooke[1] are worth quoting:—

"The calculations of the merchants do not extend beyond their own business. Why should they? Fortunately for himself, the merchant's optics are those of the lynx rather than those of the eagle. An extremely far-sighted commercial man must always run risks of bankruptcy, for the most absolutely certain sequences are often the most uncertain in point of time." The same writer, however, comments on the ignorance and narrowness of both British traders and manufacturers, and their failure to avail themselves of the opportunities offered to them of exploiting the trading resources of the Chinese. "There is no spirit of inquiry abroad," he says, "no energy at work, no notion of distracting the eye for a moment from watching those eternal shirtings, no thought whether you cannot make better shift with some other class of goods. Manchester made a great blind effort when the ports were opened, and that effort failed. Since then she has fallen into an apathy, and trusts to the chapter of accidents." As for the merchants on whom manufacturers relied to push the sale of their wares, "they come out here," he says, "to make fortunes in from five to seven years, not to force English calicoes up into remote places. Their work is to buy Chinese produce, but," he goes on, "if the English manufacturer wants extraordinary exertion, carefully collected information, and persevering up-country enterprise — and this is what he does want — he must do it himself. The

[1] China in 1857-58. Routledge.

British export trade will not maintain mercantile houses, but it would pay for travelling agents acting in immediate connection with the home manufacturers, who should keep their principals at home well informed, and who should work their operations through the established houses here. The evil is that British goods are not brought under the eyes of the Chinaman of the interior cities."

The inaccuracies of some of these comments need not obscure the shrewd and prophetic character of the general advice tendered to the British manufacturers. After an interval of forty years they have begun to act upon it, and though their progress has as yet been slow, they are taking to heart another portion of Mr Cooke's advice, that "all dealing with the interior of China is impossible unless your agents speak the language of the people."

A certain divergence between the official and non-official view of affairs had begun to show itself in the period before the war. Before the close of the East India Company's monopoly the independent merchants perceived that their interests, as well as those of the Company itself, were prejudiced by the truckling tactics of its agents, and though few in number, the mercantile community began to give utterance to their grievances and to show they had a mind of their own on public commercial policy. As the whole position of foreigners in China rested on premisses which were essentially false, disappointment, irritation, and alarm were chronic. Every one concerned, official and unofficial, was aggrieved thereby, while no one was disposed to accept blame for the grievance. A tendency to recrimination was the natural consequence. When

their representatives failed to protect them against the aggressions of the Chinese the merchants complained, while the officials in their turn were not indisposed to retort by alleging provocative or injudicious conduct on the part of the merchants themselves as contributory to the ever-recurrent difficulties. Through the retrospective vista of two generations it is easy now to see where both parties were at fault—the merchants in making too little account of the difficulties under which their representatives were labouring, and the officials in failing to perceive that the causes of their disagreements with the Chinese lay altogether deeper than the casual imprudence of any private individual, even if that could be established. The despatches of the earlier "superintendents," notably those of Sir George Robinson, betray a certain jealousy of the political influence supposed to be wielded by the mercantile community of Canton working through their associations in England, and the superintendents seemed therefore concerned to cast discredit on mercantile opinion. It would have been strange enough, had it been true, that an isolated community of a hundred individuals should be torn by faction, yet it is a fact that on their assumed disagreements an argument was based for invalidating the representations which they occasionally made to the Home Government. Their views were disparaged, their motives impugned, and their short-sighted selfishness deplored. The note struck in 1835 has been maintained with variations down almost to our own day,—a circumstance which has to be borne in mind by those who aim at a fair appreciation of British relations with China during the last sixty years.

Far, however, from being a disunited flock, the mercantile body in China generally have on the whole been singularly unanimous in their views of the political transactions with which their interests were bound up; while as to the old community of Canton, no epithet could be less appropriate than one which would imply discord. Concord was the enforced effect of their circumstances. Imprisoned within a narrow space, surrounded by a hostile people, exposed to a constant common peril, the foreign residents in Canton were bound to each other by the mere instinct of self-preservation. They became, in fact, what Nelson called his captains, a "band of brothers." The exclusion of females up till 1842, and the deterrent conditions of married life there even under the treaty, made it essentially a bachelor community, living almost like one family, or as comrades in a campaign. Of the disinterested hospitality and good-fellowship which continue to this day, even in the maturity of their domestic development, to characterise the foreign communities in China, the germ is doubtless to be discovered in that primitive society which oscillated between Canton and Macao during the thirty years which ended in 1856, in which year their factories were for the last time destroyed, and the old life finally broken up.

But there is something more to be credited to these early residents than the mutual loyalty prescribed for them by the peculiar conditions of their life. They exemplified in a special degree the true temper and feelings of gentlemen,—a moral product with which local conditions had also, no doubt, something to do. They lived in glass houses, with open doors; they

could by no means get away from one another, or evade a mutual observation which was constant and searching. Whatever standards, therefore, were recognised by the community, the individual members were constrained to live up to them in a society where words and deeds lay open to the collective criticism. And the standard was really a high one. Truth, honour, courage, generosity, nobility, were qualities common to the whole body; and those who were not so endowed by birthright could not help assuming the virtue they did not possess, and, through practice, making it eventually their own. Black sheep there were, no doubt, but being never whitewashed, they did not infect the flock, as happens in more advanced communities.

These intimate conditions favouring the formation of character were powerfully reinforced by the one feature of European life in China which was external to the residents, their contact with the surrounding mass of Chinese. The effect of intercourse with so-called inferior races is a question of much complexity, and large generalisations on such subjects are unsafe, each case being best considered on its proper merits. In their intercourse with the Chinese, certain points stood out like pillars of adamant to fix the principles by which the foreign residents were obliged to regulate their bearing towards the natives. In the first place, the strangers formed units hemmed in and pressed upon by thousands; therefore they must magnify themselves by maintaining an invincible prestige, they must in the eyes of that alien world always be heroes, and they must present a united front. Extending the same principles from the

material to the moral sphere, the foreigners must maintain the reputation of their caste for probity, liberality, and trustworthiness. Their word must be as good as their bond; they must on no account demean themselves before the heathen, nor tolerate any temptation from a Chinese source to take unfair advantage of their own kind, the Caucasian or Christian, or by whatever term we may indicate the white man. Whatever their private differences, no white man must permit himself to acquiesce in the disparagement of his own people in the view of the people of the country. They must be, one and all, above suspicion. Such were some of the considerations which were effective in maintaining the character of Europeans in China. Although association with a race so alien as the Chinese, with such different moral standards, must have had the usual deteriorating effects of such contact, yet the positive gain in the formation of character from the practice of such maxims of conduct as those above indicated probably left a balance of advantage with the China merchants.

The case would be imperfectly stated were mention not made of the process of natural selection which constituted the merchants a body of picked men. China was a remote country. It offered neither the facility of access nor the scope for adventure which in more recent times have attracted such streams of emigration to distant parts of the world. The mercantile body was a close corporation, automatically protected by barriers very difficult to surmount. The voyage itself occupied six months. Letters were rarely answered within a year. Hence all the ma-

chinery of business had to be arranged with a large prescience. Even after the opening of the overland route to Suez communication with China was maintained by sailing-ships up till 1845, when the Lady Mary Wood, the first steamer of the P. and O. Company, reached Hongkong, with no accommodation for more than a few passengers, and carrying no more cargo than a good-sized lighter. And later still, when steamers carried the mails fortnightly to China, the expense of the trip was so great that only a chosen few could afford it. It took £150 to £170 to land a single man in Hongkong, and in those days when extensive outfits were thought necessary, probably as much more had to be laid out in that way. The merchants who established themselves in China after the opening of the trade were either themselves men of large means, or they were the confidential representatives of English and American houses of great position. There were no local banks, operations extended over one or two years, an immense outlay of capital was required, and credit had to be maintained at an exceedingly high level, not only as between the merchants in China and their correspondents in London, Liverpool, New York, and Boston, but between both and the financial centre of the world. Through such a winnowing-machine only good grain could pass. It was a natural result that the English and American merchants both in China and India should have been superior as a class to the average of other commercial communities. And what was true of partners and heads of houses was no less so of their "assistants." There were no "clerks," as the term is commonly used in England,

except Portuguese hailing from the neighbouring settlement of Macao. The young men sent from England were selected with as much care as it was possible to bestow, for they were precious. Not only were they costly, but it might take a year to make good casualties. Besides, in countries situated as China was then, where contingencies of health were never out of mind, it was not worth while to send out one who was a clerk and nothing more. There must be potential capacity as well, since it could never be foreseen how soon emergencies might arise which would require him to assume the most responsible duties. Hence every new hand engaged must enjoy the fullest confidence both of his immediate employers and of the home firm to which they were affiliated.

As might be expected under such circumstances, family connections played a large part in the selection, and the tendency of the whole system was to minimise the gulf which in advanced societies separates the master from the man. In education and culture they were equals, as a consequence of which the reins of discipline might be held lightly, all service being willingly and intelligently rendered. The system of devolution was so fully developed that the assistant was practically master in his own department, for the success of which he was as zealous as the head. The "mess" *régime* under which in most houses the whole staff, employers and employees, sat at one table, tended strongly in the direction of a common social level.

What still further contributed much to raise the position of assistants was the tradition which the

merchants both in India and China inherited from the East India Company of what may be called pampering their employees. They were permitted to carry on trade on their own account, in the same commodities and with the same buyers and sellers, in which they possessed advantages over their employers in having all the firm's information at command with the privilege of using its machinery free of cost. The abuses to which such a system was liable are too obvious to be dwelt upon; but to be himself a merchant, sometimes more successful than his principal, though without his responsibilities, certainly did not detract from the social status of the assistant.

Sixty years ago the China community was composed of men in the prime of life. The average age was probably not over thirty—a man of forty was a greybeard. In this respect an evolutionary change has come over the scene, and the average age of the adult residents must have risen by at least ten years. But the China community in all its stages of development has maintained the colonial characteristic of buoyancy and hopefulness. Reverses of fortune never appalled its members. Having been early accustomed to the alternations of fat years and lean, a disastrous season was to them but the presage of a bountiful one to follow; while a succession of bad years made the reaction only the more certain. This wellspring of hope has often helped the China merchants to carry the freshness of spring even into the snows of winter. The nature of their pursuits, moreover, fostered a comprehensive spirit. Trained in the school of wholesale dealing, and habituated to work on large curves, the China merchants have all through felt the blood of the

merchant princes in their veins, and it has even been alleged to their disadvantage that, like the scions of decayed families the world over, the pomp and circumstance were maintained after the material basis had in the natural course of affairs vanished. Nay, more, that the grandiose ideas appropriate to the heirs of a protected system have disqualified them for the contest in small things which the latter days have brought upon them.

Of that restricted, protected, quasi-aristocratic, half-socialistic society some of the traditions and spirit remain; but the structure itself could not possibly withstand the aggression of modern progress, and it has been swept away. New elements have entered into the composition of the mercantile and general society of the Far East, its basis has been widened and its relations with the great world multiplied. In innumerable ways there has been improvement, not the least being the development of family life and the more enduring attachment to the soil which is the result of prolonged residence. Living, if less luxurious, is vastly more comfortable, more refined, and more civilised, and men and women without serious sacrifices make their home in a country which in the earlier days was but a scene of temporary exile. Charities abound which were not before needed; the channels of humanity have broadened, though it cannot be said at the cost of depth, for whatever else may have changed, the generosity of the foreign communities remains as princely as in the good old days.

Yet is it permissible to regret some of the robuster virtues of the generation that is past. The European solidarity *vis-à-vis* the Chinese world, which continued

practically unbroken into the eighth decade of the century, a tower of moral strength to foreigners and an object of respect to the Chinese, has now been thrown down. Not only in private adventures have foreigners in their heat of competition let themselves down to the level of Chinese tactics, but great financial syndicates have immersed themselves in intrigues which either did not tempt the men of the previous generation or tempted them in vain; and even the Great Powers themselves have descended into the inglorious arena, where decency is discarded like the superfluous garments of the gladiator, and where falsity, ultra-Chinese in quality, masquerades in Christian garb. The moral ascendancy of Christendom has been in a hundred ways shamelessly prostituted, leaving little visible distinction between the West and the East but superior energy and military force.

Take them for all in all, the China merchants have been in their day and generation no unworthy representatives of their country's interests and policy, its manhood and character. Their patriotism has not been toned down but expanded and rationalised by cosmopolitan associations, and by contact with a type of national life differing diametrically from their own. Breadth and moderation have resulted from these conditions, and a habit of tempering the exigencies of the day by the larger consideration of international problems has been characteristic of the mercantile bodies in China from first to last. And though statesmanship lies outside the range of busy men of commerce, it must be said in justice to the merchants of China that they have been consistently loyal to an ideal policy, higher in its aims and more practical in

its operation than that which any line of Western statesmen, save those of Russia, has been able to follow. It had been better if the continuous prognostications of such a compact body of opinion had been more heeded.

II. CHINESE.

Business aptitude—High standard of commercial ethics—Circumstances hindering great accumulations.

As it requires two to make a bargain, it would be an imperfect account of the China trade which omitted such an important element as the efficiency of the native trader. To him is due the fact that the foreign commerce of his country, when uninterfered with by the officials of his Government, has been made so easy for the various parties concerned in it. Of all the accomplishments the Chinese nation has acquired during the long millenniums of its history, there is none in which it has attained to such perfect mastery as in the science of buying and selling. The Chinese possess the Jews' passion for exchange. All classes, from the peasant to the prince, think in money, and the instinct of appraisement supplies to them the place of a ready reckoner, continuously converting objects and opportunities into cash. Thus surveying mankind and all its achievements with the eye of an auctioneer, invisible note-book in hand, external impressions translate themselves automatically into the language of the market-place, so that it comes as natural to the Chinaman as to the modern American, or to any other commercial people, to reduce all

forms of appreciation to the common measure of the dollar. A people imbued with such habits of mind are traders by intuition. If they have much to learn from foreigners, they have also much to teach them; and the fact that at no spot within the vast empire of China would one fail to find ready-made and eager men of business is a happy augury for the extended intercourse which may be developed in the future, while at the same time it affords the clearest indication of the true avenue to sympathetic relations with the Chinese. In every detail of handling and moving commodities, from the moment they leave the hands of the producer in his garden-patch to the time when they reach the ultimate consumer perhaps a thousand miles away, the Chinese trader is an expert. Times and seasons have been elaborately mapped out, the clue laid unerringly through labyrinthine currencies, weights, and measures which to the stranger seem a hopeless tangle, and elaborate trade customs evolved appropriate to the requirements of a myriad-sided commerce, until the simplest operation has been invested with a kind of ritual observance, the effect of the whole being to cause the complex wheels to run both swiftly and smoothly.

To crown all, there is to be noted, as the highest condition of successful trade, the evolution of commercial probity, which, though no monopoly of the Chinese merchants, is one of their distinguishing characteristics. It is that element which, in the generations before the treaties, enabled so large a commerce to be carried on with foreigners without anxiety, without friction, and almost without precaution. It has also led to the happiest personal relations between foreigners and the native trader.

When the business of the season was over [says Mr Hunter][1] contracts were made with the Hong merchants for the next season. They consisted of teas of certain qualities and kinds, sometimes at fixed prices, sometimes at the prices which should be current at the time of the arrival of the teas. No other record of these contracts was ever made than by each party booking them, no written agreements were drawn up, nothing was sealed or attested. A wilful breach of contract never took place, and as regards quality and quantity the Hong merchants fulfilled their part with scrupulous honesty and care.

The Chinese merchant, moreover, has been always noted for what he himself graphically calls his large-heartedness, which is exemplified by liberality in all his dealings, tenacity as to all that is material with comparative disregard of trifles, never letting a transaction fall through on account of punctilio, yielding to the prejudices of others wherever it can be done without substantial disadvantage, a "sweet reasonableness," if the phrase may be borrowed for such a purpose, which obviates disputation, and the manliness which does not repine at the consequences of an unfortunate contract. Judicial procedure being an abomination to respectable Chinese, their security in commercial dealings is based as much upon reason, good faith, and non-repudiation as that of the Western nations is upon verbal finesse in the construction of covenants.

Two systems so diametrically opposed can hardly admit of real amalgamation without sacrifice of the saving principle of both. And if, in the period immediately succeeding the retirement of the East India Company, perfect harmony prevailed between the Chinese and the foreign merchant, the result was apparently attained by the foreigners practically falling

[1] The Fankwae at Canton.

in with the principles and the commercial ethics of the Chinese, to which nothing has yet been found superior. The Chinese aptitude for business, indeed, exerted a peculiar influence over their foreign colleagues. The efficiency and alacrity of the native merchants and their staff were such that the foreigners fell into the way of leaving to them the principal share in managing the details of the business. When the venerable, but unnatural, Co-hong system of Old Canton was superseded by the compradoric, the connection between the foreign firm and their native staff became so intimate that it was scarcely possible to distinguish between the two, and misunderstandings have not unfrequently arisen through third parties mistaking the principal for the agent and the agent for the principal.

Such a relationship could not but foster in some cases a certain lordly abstraction on the part of the foreign merchant, to which climatic conditions powerfully contributed. The factotum, in short, became a minister of luxury, everywhere a demoralising influence, and thus there was a constant tendency for the Chinese to gain the upper hand,—to be the master in effect though the servant in name. The comprador was always consulted, and if the employer ventured to omit this formality the resulting transaction would almost certainly come to grief through inexplicable causes. Seldom, however, was his advice rejected, while many of the largest operations were of his initiation. Unlimited confidence was the rule on both sides, which often took the concrete form of considerable indebtedness, now on the one side now on the other, and was regularly shown in the despatch of large amounts of specie into the

far interior of the country for the purchase of tea and silk in the districts of their growth. For many years the old practice was followed of contracting for produce as soon as marketable, and sometimes even before. During three or four months, in the case of tea, large funds belonging to foreign merchants were in the hands of native agents far beyond the reach of the owners, who could exercise no sort of supervision over the proceedings of their agents. The funds were in every case safely returned in the form of produce purchased, which was entered to the foreign merchant at a price arbitrarily fixed by the comprador to cover all expenses. Under such a *régime* it would have needed no great perspicacity, one would imagine, to foretell in which pocket the profits of trading would eventually lodge. As a matter of fact, the comprador generally grew rich at the expense of his employer. All the while the sincerest friendship existed between them, often descending to the second or third generation.[1]

It would be natural to suppose that in such an extensive commercial field as the empire of China, exploited by such competent traders, large accumulations of wealth would be the result. Yet after making due allowance for inducements to concealment, the wealth even of the richest families probably falls far short of that which is not uncommon in Western countries. Several reasons might be adduced for the limitation, chiefly the family system, which necessitates constant redistribution, and which

[1] Apart from their liberality in the conduct of business, the generosity of the Chinese mercantile class, their gratitude for past favours, are so remarkable as to be incomprehensible to the Western mind. An account of them would read like a "fairy tale."

subjects every successful man to the attentions of a swarm of parasites, who, besides devouring his substance with riotous living, have the further opportunity of ruining his enterprises by their malfeasance. Yet although individual wealth may, from these and other causes, be confined within very moderate limits, the control of capital for legitimate business is ample. Owing to the co-operative system under which the financiers of the country support and guarantee each other, credit stands very high, enabling the widely ramified commerce of the empire to be carried on upon a very small nucleus of cash capital. The banking organisation of China is wonderfully complete, bills of exchange being currently negotiable between the most distant points of the empire, the circulation of merchandise maintaining the equilibrium with comparatively little assistance from the precious metals.

The true characteristics of a people probably stand out in a clearer light when they are segregated from the conventionalities of their home and forced to accommodate themselves to unaccustomed conditions. Following the Chinese to the various commercial colonies which they have done so much to develop, it will be found that they have carried with them into their voluntary exile the best elements of their commercial success in their mother country. The great emporium of Maimaichên, on the Siberian frontier near Kiachta, is an old commercial settlement mostly composed of natives of the province of Shansi, occupying positions of the highest respect both financially and socially. The streets of the town are regular, wide, and moderately clean. The

houses are solid, tidy, and tasteful, with pretty little courtyards, ornamental door-screens, and so forth, the style of the whole being described as superior to what is seen in the large cities within China proper. The very conditions of exile seem favourable to a higher scale of living, free alike from the incubus of thriftless relations and from the malign espionage of Government officials.

In the Philippine Islands and in Java the Chinese emigrants from the southern provinces have been the life and soul of the trade and industry of these places. So also in the British dominions, as at Singapore and Penang, which are practically Chinese Colonies under the British flag. Hongkong and the Burmese ports are of course no exceptions.

The description given by Mr Thomson [1] of the Chinese in Penang would apply equally to every part of the world in which the Chinese have been permitted to settle :—

> Should you, my reader, ever settle in Penang, you will be there introduced to a Chinese contractor who will sign a document to do anything. His costume will tell you that he is a man of inexpensive yet cleanly habits. He will build you a house after any design you choose, and within so many days, subject to a fine should he exceed the stipulated time. He will furnish you with a minute specification, in which everything, to the last nail, will be included. He has a brother who will contract to make every article of furniture you require, either from drawings or from models. He has another brother who will fit you and your good lady with all sorts of clothing, and yet a third relative who will find servants, and contract to supply you with all the native and European delicacies in the market upon condition that his monthly bills are regularly honoured.

[1] The Straits of Malacca, &c. By J. Thomson.

It is, indeed, to Chinamen that the foreign resident is indebted for almost all his comforts, and for the profusion of luxuries which surround his wonderfully European-looking home on this distant island.

The Chinese are everywhere found enterprising and trustworthy men of business. Europeans, worried by the exhaustless refinements of the Marwarree or Bengali, find business with the Chinese in the Straits Settlements a positive luxury. Nor have the persecutions of the race in the United States and in self-governing British colonies wholly extinguished the spark of honour which the Chinese carry with them into distant lands. An old "'Forty-niner," since deceased, related to the writer some striking experiences of his own during a long commercial career in San Francisco. A Chinese with whom he had dealings disappeared from the scene, leaving a debt to Mr Forbes of several thousand dollars. The account became an eyesore in the books, and the amount was formally "written off" and forgotten. Some years after, Mr Forbes was surprised by a visit from a weather-beaten Chinese, who revealed himself as the delinquent Ah Sin and asked for his account. Demurring to the trouble of exhuming old ledgers, Mr Forbes asked Ah Sin incredulously if he was going to pay. "Why, certainly," said the debtor. The account was thereupon rendered to him with interest, and after a careful examination and making some corrections, Ah Sin undid his belt and tabled the money to the last cent, thereupon vanishing into space whence he had come.

CHAPTER XIV.

HONGKONG.

Two British landmarks—Chinese customs and Hongkong—Choice of the island—Vitality of colony—Asylum for malefactors—Chinese official hostility—Commanding commercial position—Crown Colony government—Management of Chinese population—Their improvement—English education—Material progress—Industrial institutions—Accession of territory.

THE past sixty years of war and peace in China have left two landmarks as concrete embodiments of British policy—the Chinese maritime customs and the colony of Hongkong. These are documents which testify in indelible characters both to the motives and to the methods of British expansion throughout the world. For good and for evil their record cannot be explained away. Both institutions are typically English, inasmuch as they are not the fulfilment of a dream or the working out of preconcerted schemes, but growths spontaneously generated out of the local conditions, much like that of the British empire itself, and with scarcely more conscious foresight on the part of those who helped to rear the edifice.

The relation of the British empire to the world, which defies definition, is only revealed in scattered object-lessons. India throws some light upon it—the colonies much more; and though in some respects

unique in its character, Hongkong in its degree stands before the world as a realisation of the British ideal, with its faults and blunders as well as with its excellences and successes.

The want of a British station on the China coast had long been felt, and during the ten years which preceded the cession innumerable proposals were thrown out, some of which distinctly indicated Hongkong itself as supplying the desideratum. But as to the status of the new port the various suggestions made neutralised each other, until the course of events removed the question out of the region of discussion and placed it in the lap of destiny.

The earliest English visitors to the island described it as inhabited by a few weather-beaten fishermen, who were seen spreading their nets and drying their catch on the rocks. Cultivation was restricted to small patches of rice, sweet-potatoes, and buckwheat. The abundance of fern gave it in places an appearance of verdure, but it was on the whole a treeless, rugged, barren block of granite. The gentlemen of Lord Amherst's suite in 1816, who have left this record, made another significant observation. The precipitous island, twelve miles long, with its deep-water inlets, formed one side of a land-locked harbour, which they called Hongkong Sound, capable of sheltering any number of ships of the largest size. Into this commodious haven the English fugitives, driven first from Canton and then from Macao, by the drastic decree of the Chinese authorities in 1839, found a refuge for their ships, and afterwards a footing on shore for themselves. Stern necessity and not their wills sent them thither. The same necessity ordained that the little band, once

lodged there, should take root, and growth followed as the natural result of the inherent vitality of the organism. As Dr Eitel well points out, this small social body did not originate in Hongkong: it had had a long preparatory history in Macao, and in the Canton factories, and may be considered, therefore, in the light of a healthy swarm from the older hives.

During the first few years of the occupation the selection of the station was the subject of a good deal of cheap criticism in the press. A commercial disappointment and a political failure, it was suggested by some that the place should be abandoned. It was contrasted unfavourably with the island of Chusan, which had been receded to China under the same treaty which had ceded Hongkong to Great Britain; and even as late as 1858 Lord. Elgin exclaimed, "How anybody in their senses could have preferred Hongkong to Chusan seems incredible."

But, in point of fact, there had been little or no conscious choice in the matter. The position may be said to have chosen itself, since no alternative was left to the first British settlers. As for Chusan, it had been occupied and abandoned several times. The East India Company had an establishment there in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and if that station was finally given up either on its merits or in favour of Hongkong, it was certainly not without experience of the value of the more northerly position. Whatever hypothetical advantages, commercial or otherwise, might have accrued from the retention of Chusan, the actual position attained by Hongkong as an emporium of trade, a centre of industry, and one of the great shipping ports in the world, furnishes an un-

answerable defence both of the choice of the site and the political structure which has been erected on it. Canton being at once the centre of foreign trade and the focus of Chinese hostility, vicinity to that city was an indispensable condition of the location of the British entrepot, and the place of arms from which commerce could be defended. And it would be hard even now to point to any spot on the Chinese coast which fulfilled the conditions so well as Hongkong.

The course of its development did not run smooth. It was not to be expected. The experiment of planting a British station in contact with the most energetic as well as the most turbulent section of the population of China was not likely to be carried out without mistakes, and many have been committed. Indeed, from the day of its birth down to the present time domestic dissensions and recriminations respecting the management of its affairs have never ceased.

This was inevitable in a political microcosm having neither diversity of interest nor atmospheric space to soften the perspective. The entire interests of the colony were comprised within the focal distance of myopic vision. Molehills thus became mountains, and the mote in each brother's eye assumed the dimensions of animalcula seen through a microscope. The bitter feuds between the heads of the several departments of the lilliputian Government which prevailed during the first twenty years must have been fatal to any young colony if its progress had depended on the wisdom of its rulers. Happily a higher law governs all these things.

Freedom carried with it the necessary consequences, and for many years the new colony was a tempting

Alsatia for Chinese malefactors, an asylum for pirates, who put on and off that character with wonderful facility, and could hatch their plots there fearless of surveillance. When the Taiping rebellion was at its height, piracy became so mixed with insurrection that the two were not distinguishable, and it required both firmness and vigilance on the part of the authorities to prevent the harbour of Hongkong becoming the scene of naval engagements between the belligerents. During the hostilities of 1857-58 a species of dacoity was practised with impunity by Chinese, who were tempted by rewards for the heads of Englishmen offered by the authorities of Canton.

It cannot, therefore, be denied that the immigrants from the mainland in the first and even the second decade of its existence were leavened with an undesirable element, causing anxiety to the responsible rulers.

The Chinese authorities, as was natural, waged relentless war on the colony from its birth. Though compelled formally to admit that the island and its dependencies were a British possession, they still maintained a secret authority over the Chinese who settled there, and even attempted to levy taxes. As they could not lay hands on its trade, except the valuable portion of it which was carried on by native craft, they left no stone unturned to destroy that. By skilful diplomacy, for which they are entitled to the highest credit, they obtained control over the merchant junks trading to Hongkong, and imposed restrictions on them calculated to render their traffic impossible. By the same treaty they obtained the appointment of a British officer as Chinese revenue agent in Hongkong—a concession, however, disallowed

by the good sense of the British Government. But the Chinese were very tenacious of the idea of making Hongkong a customs station, never relaxing their efforts for forty years, until the convention of 1886 at last rewarded their perseverance by a partial fulfilment of their hopes.

For reasons which, if not very lofty, are yet very human, the diplomatic and consular agents of Great Britain have never looked sympathetically on the colony—indeed have often sided with the Chinese in their attempts to curtail its rights.

Nor has the Home Government itself always treated the small colony with parental consideration. Before it was out of swaddling-clothes the Treasury ogre began to open his mouth and, like the East India Company, demand remittances. A military establishment was maintained on the island, not for the benefit of the residents, but for the security of a strategical position in the imperial system. The colonists were mulcted in a substantial share of the cost, which the governor was instructed to wring out of them. The defences themselves, however, were neglected, and allowed to grow obsolete and useless, and, if we mistake not, it was the civil community, and not the Government, that insisted on their being modernised. The compromise eventually arrived at was, that the colonists provided the guns and the imperial Government the forts. An interesting parallel to this was the case of Gibraltar, which possessed no dock until the civil community by sheer persistence, extending over many years, at length overcame the reluctance of the British Government to provide so essential an adjunct to its naval estab-

lishment. The colony had suffered much from the war with China, but the Home Government refused it any participation in the indemnity extorted from the Chinese.

But these and other drawbacks were counterbalanced, and eventually remedied, by the advantages offered by a free port and a safe harbour. Standing in the fair way of all Eastern commerce, which pays willing tribute to the colony, Hongkong attracted trade from all quarters in a steadily increasing volume, and became the pivot for the whole ocean traffic of the Far East.[1] The tide of prosperity could not be stayed—it invaded every section of the community. The character of the Chinese population was continuously raised. The best of them accumulated wealth: the poorest found remunerative employment for their labour. Crime, with which the colony had been tainted, diminished as much through the expulsive power of material prosperity as from the judicious measures of the executive Government, for the credit must not be denied to successive administrators for the improvement in the condition of the colony. Among those none was more deserving of praise than Sir Richard MacDonnell (1865-72), who on catching sight, as he entered the harbour, of an enormous building, which he was told was the jail, remarked, "I will not fill that, but stop the crime;" and he was nearly as good as his word,—a terror to evil-doers.

A Crown colony is the form of government which challenges the most pungent criticism. The elected

[1] The tonnage entered and cleared for the year 1898 amounted to 17,265,780, of which one-half was under the British flag.

members of its legislature, being a minority, can only in the last resort acquiesce in the decisions of the official majority who constitute the executive Government. Such a minority, however, is by no means wanting in influence, for it is, after all, publicity which is the safeguard of popular liberty. The freedom of speech enjoyed by an Opposition which has no fear of the responsibility of office before its eyes widens the scope of its criticisms, and imparts a refreshing vigour to the invective of those of its members who possess the courage of their convictions. It reaches the popular ear, and the apprehension of an adverse public opinion so stimulated can never fail to have its effect on the acts of the Administration. Under such a *régime* it seems natural that, other things being equal, each governor in turn should be esteemed the worst who has borne rule in the colony, and in any case his merits are never likely to be fairly gauged by any local contemporary estimate. King Stork, though fair and far-seeing, may be more obnoxious to criticism than King Log, who makes things pleasant during his official term.

Hongkong being established as a free port, the functions of Government were practically limited to internal administration, and the question of greatest importance was the control of the Chinese population which poured in. This was a new problem. Chinese communities had, indeed, settled under foreign rule before, as in the Straits Settlements, in Java, and in Manila, but at such distances from their home as rendered the settlers amenable to any local regulations which might be imposed on them.

Distance even acted as a strainer, keeping back the dregs. But Hongkong was nearer to China than the Isle of Wight is to Hampshire. Evil-doers could come and go at will. It could be overrun in the night and evacuated in the morning. Spies were as uncontrollable as house-flies, and whenever it suited the Chinese Government to be hostile, they proved their power to establish such a reign of terror in the colony that it was dangerous to stray beyond the beat of the armed policeman. Clearly it was of primary importance to come to terms with the native community, to reduce them to discipline, to encourage the good and discourage the bad among the Chinese settlers. As their numbers increased the public health demanded a yet stricter supervision of their habits. Sanitary science had scarcely dawned when the colony was founded, and its teachings had to be applied, as they came to light, to conditions of life which had been allowed to grow up in independence of its requirements. To tolerate native customs, domestic habits, and manner of living, while providing for the general wellbeing of a community in a climate which at its best is debilitating, taxed the resources of the British executive, and of course gave rise to perpetual recrimination. But the thing has been accomplished. Successive conflagrations have co-operated with the march of sanitary reform and the advance in their worldly circumstances in so improving the dwellings of the population, that their housing now compares not unfavourably with that of the native cities of India. The Southern Chinese are naturally cleanly, and appreciative of good order

when it is judiciously introduced among them, even from a foreign source.

A more complex question was that of bringing an alien population such as the Chinese within the moral pale of English law, for law is vain unless it appeals to the public conscience. The imposition of foreign statutes on a race nursed on oral tradition and restrained from misdoing by bonds invisible to their masters was not an undertaking for which success could be safely foretold. The effect of a similar proceeding on the subtle natives of India has been described as "substituting for a recognised morality a mere game of skill, at which the natives can give us long odds and beat us." "The mercantile and money-lending classes in India," says Mr S. S. Thorburn, "delight in the intricacy and surprises of a good case in court." With the Chinese it has been otherwise. The population of Hongkong have so far assimilated the foreign law that, whether or not it satisfies their innate sense of right, it at least governs their external conduct, and crime has been reduced very low: as for litigation, it is comparatively rare; it is disreputable, and has no place in the Chinese commercial economy.

The best proofs of their acceptance of colonial rule is the constantly increasing numbers of the Chinese residents; the concentration of their trading capital there; their investments in real estate and in local industries; their identification with the general interests of the colony, and their adopting it as a home instead of a place of temporary exile. The means employed to conciliate the Chinese must be deemed on the whole to have been successful. There was first police super-

vision, then official protection under a succession of qualified officers, then representation in the Colonial Legislature and on the commission of the peace. The colonial executive has wisely left to the Chinese a large measure of a kind of self-government which is far more effective than anything that could find its expression in votes of the Legislature. The administration of purely Chinese affairs by native committees, with a firm ruling hand over their proceedings, seems to fulfil every purpose of government. The aim has been throughout to ascertain and to gratify, when practicable, the reasonable wants of the Chinese, who have responded to these advances by an exhibition of public spirit which no society could excel. It is doubtful whether in the wide dominion of the Queen there are 250,000 souls more appreciative of orderly government than the denizens of the whilom nest of pirates and cut-throats—Hongkong.

As an educational centre Hongkong fulfils a function whose value is difficult to estimate. From the foundation of the colony the subject engaged the attention of the executive Government, as well as of different sections of the civil community. The missionary bodies were naturally very early in the field, and there was for a good many years frank co-operation between them and the mercantile community in promoting schools both for natives and Europeans. In time, however, either their aims were found to diverge or else their estimate of achievement differed, and many of the missionary teaching establishments were left without support.

After an interval of languor, however, new life was infused into the educational schemes of the colony.

The emulation of religious sects and the common desire to bring the lambs of the flock into their respective folds inspired the efforts of the propagandists, their zeal reacting on the colonial Government itself with the most gratifying results, so far at least as the extension of the field of their common efforts was concerned.

The Chinese had imported their own school systems, while taking full advantage of the educational facilities provided by the Government and the Christian bodies. Being an intellectual race, they are well able to assimilate the best that Christendom has to offer them. But the colonial system contents itself with a sound practical commercial education, which has equipped vast numbers of Chinese for the work of clerks, interpreters, and so forth, and has thus been the means of spreading the knowledge of the English language over the coast of China, and of providing a medium of communication between the native and European mind.

The material progress of Hongkong speaks volumes for the energy of its community. The precipitous character of the island left scarcely a foothold for business or residential settlement. The strip which formed the strand front of the city of Victoria afforded room for but one street, forcing extensions up the rugged face of the hill which soon was laid out in zig-zag terraces: foundations for the houses are scarped out of the rock, giving them the appearance of citadels. The locality being subject to torrential rains, streets and roads had to be made with a finished solidity which is perhaps unmatched. Bridges, culverts, and gutters all being constructed of hewn granite and fitted with impervious cement, the storm-waters are carried off as

clean as from a ship's deck. These municipal works were not achieved without great expense and skilfully directed labour, of which an unlimited supply can always be depended on. And the credit of their achievement must be equally divided between the Government and the civil community.

The island is badly situated as regards its water-supply, which has necessitated the excavation of immense reservoirs on the side farthest from the town, the aqueduct being tunnelled for over a mile through a solid granite mass. These and other engineering works have rendered Hongkong the envy of the older colonies in the Far East. No less so the palatial architecture in which the one natural product of the island has been turned to the most effective account. The quarrying of granite blocks, in which the Chinese are as great adepts as they are in dressing the stones for building, has been so extensive as visibly to alter the profile of the island.

A great deficiency of the island as a commercial site being the absence of level ground, the enterprise of the colonists has been incessantly directed towards supplying the want. Successive reclamations on the sea-front, costing of course large sums of money, have so enlarged the building area that the great thoroughfare called Queen's Road now runs along the back instead of the front of a new city, the finest buildings of all being the most recent, standing upon the newly reclaimed land. It is characteristic of such improvements, that, while in course of execution, they should be deemed senseless extravagance, due to the ambition of some speculator or the caprice of some idealist, thus perpetually illustrating the truth of the Scottish saying, "Fules and

bairns should never see a thing half done." Hongkong has been no exception to so universal a rule.

The industrial enterprise of the colony has fully kept pace with its progress in other respects. The Chinese quarter resembles nothing so much as a colony of busy ants, where every kind of handicraft is plied with such diligence, day in and day out, as the Chinese alone seem capable of. The more imposing works conducted by foreigners occupy a prominent place in the whole economy of the Far East. Engineering and shipbuilding have always been carried on in the colony. Graving-docks capable of accommodating modern battleships, and of executing any repairs or renewals required by them as efficiently as could be done in any part of the world, constitute Hongkong a rendezvous for the navies of all nations. Manufactures of various kinds flourish on the island. Besides cotton-mills, some of the largest sugar-refineries in the world, fitted with the most modern improvements, work up the raw material from Southern China, Formosa, the Philippines, and other sugar-growing countries in the Eastern Archipelago, thus furnishing a substantial item of export to the Australian colonies and other parts of the world. The colony has thereby created for itself a commerce of its own, while its strategical situation has enabled it to retain the character of a pivot on which all Far Eastern commerce turns.

This pivotal position alone, and not the local resources of the place, enabled the colony to found one of the most successful financial organisations of the modern world. The Hongkong and Shanghai Bank has had a history not dissimilar from that of the

colony as a whole, one of success followed by periods of alternate depression and elation. Now in the trough of the wave and now on its crest, the bank has worked its way by inherent vitality through all vicissitudes of good or bad fortune, until it has gone near to monopolising the exchange business of the Far East, and has become the recognised medium between the money-market of London and the financial needs of the Imperial Chinese administration.

It should not be overlooked as a condition of its success that the great Hongkong Bank, like all other successful joint-stock enterprises, whether in Hongkong or in China, has from its origin borne a broad international character. Though legally domiciled in a British possession, representative men of all nationalities sit on its board and take their turn in the chairmanship as it comes round. The international character, indeed, may be cited as one of the elements of the success of the colony itself. No disability of any kind attaches to alien settlers, not even exclusion from the jury panel. They are free to acquire property, to carry on business, to indulge their whims, and to avail themselves of all the resources of the colony, and enjoy the full protection of person and property which natural-born British subjects possess. They come and go at their pleasure, no questions asked, no luggage examined, no permits required for any purpose whatever coming within the scope of ordinary life. Nor are they even asked whether they appreciate these advantages or not; in fact they are as free to criticise the institutions under which they live as if they had borne their part in creating them, which, in fact, they have done, and this it is which

marks the vitality of the British system, whether in the mother country or in its distant dependencies.

The exceedingly cramped conditions of life on the island having proved such an obstacle to its development, the acquisition of a portion of the mainland forming one side of the harbour was at an early period spoken of as a desideratum for the colony. The idea took no practical shape, however, until the occupation of Canton by the Allied forces under the administration of Consul Parkes; and it is one of the most noteworthy achievements of that indefatigable man that, during the time when Great Britain was in fact at war with the Government of China, he should have succeeded, on his own initiative, in obtaining from the governor of the city a lease of a portion of land at Kowloon, which was subsequently confirmed by the convention of Peking in 1860. The improvement of artillery and other means of attack on sea-forts left the island very vulnerable, and the measures taken by the various European Powers to establish naval stations on the Chinese coast, together with the efforts which the country itself was making to become a modern military Power, rendered it a matter of absolute necessity, for the preservation of the island, that a sufficient area of the adjacent territory should be included within its defences. Following the example set by Germany and Russia, the British Government concluded an arrangement with the Government of China by which the needed extension was secured to Great Britain under a ninety-nine years lease. A convention embodying this agreement was signed at Peking in June 1898.

CHAPTER XV.

MACAO.

Contrast with Hongkong—An interesting survival—Trading facilities—Relations with Chinese Government—Creditable to both parties—Successful resistance to the Dutch—Portuguese expulsion from Japan—English trading competitors enjoy hospitality of Macao—Trade with Canton—Hongkong becomes a rival—Macao eclipsed—Gambling, Coolie trade, Piracy—Population—Cradle of many improvements—Distinguished names.

THE three hours' transit from Hongkong to Macao carries one into another world. The incessant scream of steam-launches which plough the harbour in all directions night and day gives place to the drowsy chime of church bells, and instead of the throng of busy men, one meets a solitary black mantilla walking demurely in the middle of a crooked and silent street. Perhaps nowhere is the modern world with its clamour thrown into such immediate contrast with that which belongs to the past.

The settlement of Macao is a monument of Chinese toleration and of Portuguese tenacity. The Portuguese learnt at an early stage of their intercourse the use of the master-key to good relations with the Chinese authorities. It was to minister freely to their cupidity, which the Portuguese could well afford to do out of the profits of their trading. To "maintain ourselves in

this place we must spend much with the Chinese heathen," as they themselves said in 1593 in a letter to Philip I. Macao is, besides, an interesting relic of that heroic age when a new heaven and a new earth became the dream of European adventurers. The spot was excellently well suited for the purposes, commercial and propagandist, which it was destined to serve; for in spite of the crimes and cruelties of the sixteenth century argonauts, the religious element was strongly represented in all their enterprises.[1] Situated outside the river proper, though within its wide estuary, and open to the sea, the settlement yet communicates by an inner passage or branch of the Pearl river with the city of Canton. It possesses two sheltered harbours adequate to the nautical requirements of the Middle Ages.

The small peninsula of Macao combined business conveniences with salubrity of climate in a degree absolutely unrivalled in the torrid zone. Its picturesque scenery was always found refreshing to the eye wearied by long contemplation of brick walls, malarious swamps, or the monotonous glare of the melancholy ocean. From the Chinese point of view, also, it was an ideal location for strangers, since they could be thus kept out of sight, isolated like a ship in quarantine, and put under

[1] Nomenclature alone sufficiently attests this fact—whether of the ships that carried them or of the lands they christened, as Natal, Trinidad, &c. The gigantic cross carved in the granite face of Table Mountain (it is said) by Vasco da Gama proclaimed to the wide ocean the sanctity of his mission. English adventurers were strongly imbued with the same pious spirit. Down to our own day marine policies open with the words, "In the name of God, Amen"; while the bill of lading, which within the past generation has become packed with clauses like a composite Act of Parliament—all tending to absolve the owner from responsibility as carrier—formerly began with the words, "Shipped by the grace of God," and ended with the prayer that "God would send the good ship to her desired port in safety."

effective restraint. The situation lent itself to the traditional Chinese tactics of controlling barbarians by stopping their food-supply, a form of discipline of which the efficacy had been proved at an early period in the history of the colony. The Chinese adopted all the measures they could think of to confine traders to Macao, where certain indulgences were held out to them, subject to good behaviour.

The Portuguese adventurers of the early sixteenth century, to whom the modern world owes so much, did well in pitching on this "gem of the orient earth and open sea" as a link in their chain of trading stations, which extended from the coasts of Africa to the Japanese islands. To trade as such the Chinese Government never seem to have had any objection, nor, would it appear, to foreigners as such. So long as there was nought to fear from their presence, the ancient maxim of cherishing men from afar could be followed without reserve, for the Chinese are by nature not an unkindly people. Tradition, indeed, claims for the settlement of foreigners in the Cantonese archipelago a purely hospitable origin, a storm-beaten vessel having in the year 1517 received permission from the local authorities to repair damages and dry her cargo there. The Portuguese frequented several harbours before they settled at Macao, their principal station being the island of Sanchuan, where Xavier was buried. About the middle of the sixteenth century, the city of Canton being besieged by a large piratical force whose base of operations was Macao, the high provincial authorities in their extremity sought the aid of the Portuguese, who came promptly to the rescue of the city, defeated the pirates, and captured their strong-

hold. Moved by mixed feelings of gratitude and policy, the Canton authorities thereupon sanctioned the Portuguese occupation of Macao, not ill-pleased to set up at that strategic point so effective a counterpoise to the native pirates.

It said as much for the tact of the Portuguese as for the forbearance of the Chinese authorities that such an isolated position as that of Macao should have been held without force, and only on the prestige of past achievements, on terms of mutual amity, for nearly four hundred years. The Portuguese squatters paid to the Chinese Government a ground-rent of about £150 per annum, in consideration of which they enjoyed practical independence. "The merchants, fully aware that their settlement at Macao was due neither to any conquest, nor as a return for services by co-operating in destruction of pirates, bore in mind two principles—to be on good terms with the provincial authorities, and to improve as much as possible their exclusive trade with China." The forms of administrative authority were indeed maintained by the Chinese, their permission being required to reside and to build houses and so forth—regulations which were more vexatious, perhaps, in theory than in fact. The exercise of Chinese jurisdiction over the person was asserted with moderation as regards the Portuguese, though full authority was maintained over the native population. The Portuguese, however, became dissatisfied with the relationship which had worked smoothly for three hundred years, and when the treaty-making era arrived they sought means to improve their status. By persistent efforts they gradually freed themselves from the overlord-

ship of China, this object being finally attained by good diplomacy in 1887, when the Imperial Government ceded to Portugal sovereign rights over Macao in consideration of assistance rendered by the colony in the collection of the Chinese opium revenue.

Macao did not escape the fortunes of the long war of commercial supremacy which was waged between Holland and Portugal, but the colony successfully resisted two attempts to reduce it in 1622 and 1627. Its resources at that period enabled the diminutive settlement even to play some part in the game of empire in China itself, for we are told that a force of 400 men from India, under the command of two Portuguese officers, proceeded by land to Peking to support the last Ming emperor in his struggle with the invading Manchus. These auxiliaries returned whence they came without seeing active service.

Although the Dutch failed to take military possession of Macao, they took other trading colonies, and succeeded eventually in wresting from the Portuguese their Asiatic commerce. They supplanted them entirely in Japan, whose "gold and spoils" had greatly enriched the colony. Being expelled, not without reason, in 1662, the Portuguese fugitives from Japan retired to Macao.

Other competitors also began to appear and to assert their right to participate in the trade of the Far East, and Macao became the hostelry for merchants of all nations, who carried on business with the great Chinese emporium, Canton. Chief among these guests were the Dutch and English East India Companies, both of which maintained establishments at Macao for some two hundred years.

The English Company had made use of the Macao anchorage first under a treaty with the viceroy of Goa, and subsequently under Cromwell's treaty with the Portuguese Government in 1654, which permitted English ships to enter all the ports in the Portuguese Indies. Before the close of the seventeenth century ships were despatched direct from England to Macao. The English adventurers were not satisfied with the privilege of anchoring so far from the great emporium, but direct trade with Canton had yet to be fought for. The energetic Captain Weddell, commanding the ship London, in 1655 met the obstructive tactics of the Cantonese authorities by bombarding the Bogue forts and forcing his way up the river, after which he was received in friendly audience by the viceroy, and was granted full participation in the Canton trade, much to the chagrin, it is said, of the jealous Macao merchants.

The loss of its own direct commerce was thus compensated for by the tribute which the Portuguese colony was able to levy upon the general trade of China, by whomsoever carried on. Massive houses, with immense verandahs running all round them, and spacious and cool interior recesses, attest to this day the ancient glory of Macao. Though now neglected, and perhaps converted to baser uses, they afford a glimpse of the easy life led by the Company's agents and the merchants in the days before the treaty. During the business season, which was in the cool months, the whole mercantile community repaired to the factories at Canton while the ships lay at the deep-water anchorage of Whampoa, and between these two points the work of the year

was done—arduous enough, no doubt, while it lasted. In spite of some contemporary testimony to the contrary, one can hardly conceive the quasi-imprisonment within the Canton factories as a kind of life to be enjoyed, but only as one to be endured for an object. At any rate, when the last cargo of tea had been shipped off the scene was like the break-up of a school. The merchants and their whole establishment betook themselves to their sumptuous river barges, and glided down the stream to Macao, where the luxury of a long holiday awaited them. Once at least in every year the foreigners were in full accord with the Chinese authorities, who sternly forbade loitering, and kept up the form of peremptorily sending the merchants away as soon as their business had been done. Nevertheless, those who desired to remain found no difficulty.

The Portuguese colony, whether or not under compulsion, played an ungracious part in the troubles which preceded the outbreak of war between Great Britain and China. To evict from their houses a company of helpless people and drive them to sea, even at the bidding of an oriental tyrant, was a proceeding little in keeping with the traditions of Lusitanian chivalry. But Englishmen may very well forgive the Portuguese this act of inhumanity, since it compelled the fugitives to seek a home of their own in the Canton waters, destined to eclipse the fading glories of "la cidade do nome de Deos da Macao."

The treaty of 1842, which enabled British merchants to set up house for themselves, deprived Macao of a large portion of its revenue; but even under this eclipse

the era of its prosperity did not then come quite to an end.

The occupation of Hongkong supplied to British traders all the wants which Macao had previously furnished, accompanied by a security which the Portuguese Administration was unable to confer. Its harbour was incomparably superior, fulfilling all the requirements of a modern seaport. These advantages were irresistible; nevertheless, the merchants vacated with evident reluctance the roomy mansions in which the pleasantest part of their lives had been spent. Several of them retained possession of their Macao homes, using them for purposes of recreation. "Dent's comfortable quarters at Macao" afforded an agreeable retreat for Admiral Keppel, and no doubt many others of the nautical brotherhood before and after his time; for the sea-breezes of Macao were almost as great a relief to the denizens of Queen's Road as to the community which, after the treaty, was permanently quartered in the Canton factories. To this day Macao, well served by fast and commodious steamers, remains a favoured resort for week-end tourist parties, picnics, honeymoons, and the like.

The population of Macao is estimated at 75,000 Chinese and under 4000 Portuguese, of whom the percentage of pure blood is not large. The so-called Portuguese of the Chinese coast differ from those of Goa as the Chinese differ from the Indian natives. They supply a want in the general economy: in China, as clerks, for whose work they have, like the indispensable babu, a natural aptitude; in India, as domestic and personal servants. With the increase of typewriting and the practice of dictation in mercantile establish-

DENT'S VERANDAH, MACAO.

ments the clerical services of the Macaese are likely to assume less importance. They are good Catholics, smoke cigarettes, and are harmless.

Though for many years Macao suffered depression from the loss of its foreign trade, its natural advantages in course of time attracted to it new branches of industry, which to some extent revived its drooping prosperity. Foreign and native merchants found it convenient to conduct a certain portion of their trade in tea and silk and other articles in the quiet old city, where burdens were light and labour abundant. Traffic of a less desirable character found also its natural domicile in the colony. It became the headquarters of the lucrative coolie trade, which there for many years found an asylum where it feared no law, human or divine. To the credit of the Portuguese Government, however, this traffic was abolished in 1874. Opium and gambling licences now provide the chief contributions to a colonial revenue, the surplus of which over expenditure furnishes a respectable annual tribute to the needy mother country.

There is yet another species of enterprise historically associated with the colony which cannot be altogether omitted, though it should be mentioned with the extenuating circumstances. Piracy, as we have seen, was rampant on the coasts of Asia, as it was also in Europe, before Vasco da Gama doubled the Cape; and it was not to be expected in an age when successful buccaneers in the Atlantic were earning distinction by harassing the common enemy Spain, that an isolated colony in remote Asia, detached from Europe a century and a half earlier, should have anticipated the ethical refinements of the

awakening conscience of Christendom. Slavery itself was tolerated among the most enlightened races until the middle of the present century, and if the Macaese did feel a sneaking toleration for mitigated forms of it, as well as for other species of criminality which flourished all round them, it must be admitted the temptation lay very near to their hand. They had been brought up for centuries in close familiarity with the practices of the sea-rover. Though it cannot be said that piracy ever took rank as a domestic institution in patriarchal Macao, yet the openings for young men were much restricted by family custom, and instances have been reported of improvident sons laying unfilial hands on their fathers' junks on the coast with a view to rectifying the balance of the family finance. Whether or not such modes of redress were ever actually carried into effect; the fact that legends of this character should have woven themselves into the tissue of local gossip within comparatively recent times, and in connection with well-known names, indicates a state of feeling which should be allowed for in considering the relation of Macao to Chinese piracy.

The influence of Macao on the history of foreign relations with China extended much beyond the sphere of mere commercial interests. For three hundred years it was for foreigners the gate of the Chinese empire, and all influences, good and bad, which came from without were infiltrated through that narrow opening, which also served as the medium through which China was revealed to the Western world. It was in Macao that the first lighthouse was erected, a symbol of the illuminating mission of foreigners in China. It was

there also that the first printing-press was set up, employing movable type instead of the stereotype wooden blocks used by the Chinese. From that press was issued Morrison's famous Dictionary, and for a long series of years the Chinese Repository, a perfect store-house of authentic information concerning the Chinese empire, conducted chiefly by English and American missionaries. The first foreign hospital in China was opened at Macao, and there vaccination was first practised. It was from Macao that the father of China missions, Matteo Ricci, started on his adventurous journey through the interior of the country in the sixteenth century, ultimately reaching the capital, where he established an influence over the Imperial Court scarcely less than miraculous, thus laying the foundation-stone of the Catholic propaganda in China. The little Portuguese settlement has therefore played no mean part in the changes which have taken place in the great empire of China.

Of the personages associated with its history, the most brilliant, or at least the best known, was St Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies,—a man of so magnetic a character that he was credited with the miraculous gift of tongues, while as a matter of fact he seems not to have been even an ordinarily good linguist, speaking to the natives of the Far East only through an interpreter. Xavier died and was buried in the neighbouring island of Sanchuan, whence his remains were transferred first to Macao itself and afterwards to Goa. The names of Xavier and Ricci cast a halo over the first century of the existence of Macao. Another of the earlier residents of world-wide fame was the poet Camöens, who in a grotto formed of granite blocks

tumbled together by nature, almost washed by the sea, sat and wrote the Portuguese epic 'The Lusiad,' celebrating the adventures of the great navigator Vasco da Gama. Of names belonging to the present century, or the English period, two only need be mentioned here. One was Robert Morrison, the father of English sinology, who was sent to China by the London Missionary Society in 1807. This remarkable man had mastered the initial difficulties of the Chinese language before leaving England. This he accomplished by the aid of a young Cantonese, and by diligent study of MSS. in the British Museum, and of a MS. Latin-Chinese dictionary lent to him by the Royal Society. His teacher accompanied him on the long voyage to China, during which Morrison laboured "from morning to midnight." In Canton a Pekingese teacher, a Catholic convert, was obtained, and the study of Chinese was carried on assiduously. The most enduring monument of these labours was the Chinese-English dictionary, which was printed by the East India Company at a cost of £15,000. This standard work has been the fountain from which all students of Chinese have drawn since his time.

Art has had but one representative, an Irish gentleman named George Chinnery, who resided in Macao from 1825 till his death in 1852. Of Mr Chinnery's drawings and paintings there are many scattered collections, on some of which we have been able to draw for the illustrations in these volumes.

GEORGE CHINNERY.

(*From an oil-painting by himself.*)

CHAPTER XVI.

PIRACY.

Association with Hongkong and Macao—Activity of British navy in suppressing piracy—Its historic importance—Government relations with pirates—The convoy system—Gross abuse—Hongkong legislation—Progress of steam navigation—Fatal to piracy.

A FACTOR which has done so much to shape commercial intercourse with China as piracy cannot be properly ignored in a survey like the present. The settlements of Hongkong and Macao were forced into contact with this time-honoured institution, for these places are situated as near to the piratical centre as they are to that of the typhoon zone. From the time of the first war down to quite recent years the British squadron on the China station was almost engrossed in the two duties of surveying the coast and rivers, and of repressing piracy,—services which were not interrupted even during the progress of a war with the Imperial Government. Both proceedings were anomalous, being a usurpation of the sovereign functions of the Chinese Government. That Government, however, never evinced more than a languid interest in operations against its piratical subjects. Piracy, as such, seems indeed to have enjoyed that fatalistic toleration which the Chinese Government and people are wont to ex-

tend to every species of abuse, on the principle that what cannot be cured must be endured. Nor is China the only country where banditti have established with their future victims a conventional relation like that of certain predatory animals which are said to live on easy terms with the creatures destined to become their prey. Successful leaders, whether of brigands or of sea-rovers, have from time to time attained high political status in the empire. Wingrove Cooke says:—

Whenever anything occurs of historic importance we always find that some bandit has had a hand in it. The land was always full of them. When the Tartars possessed themselves of China, one of these bandit chiefs had just possessed himself of Peking, and the last of the Ming race had just hanged himself. It was a pirate who drove the Dutch out of Formosa; the son of a "celebrated pirate" who helped the Cantonese to defend their city against the Tartars; and it was a pirate who the other day destroyed the Portuguese piratical fleet at Ningpo. In all ages and at all times China has been coasted by pirates and traversed by bands of robbers.

In the 'Peking Gazette,' which he quotes, the Imperial Government itself thus describes the rule of the robbers:—

They carry off persons in order to extort ransoms for them; they falsely assume the characters of police officers; they build fast boats professedly to guard the grain-fields, and into these they put from ten to twenty men, who cruise along the rivers, violently plundering the boats of travellers, or forcibly carrying off the wives and daughters of the *tanka* boat people. The inhabitants of the villages and hamlets fear these robbers as they would tigers, and do not offer them any resistance. The husbandman must pay these robbers a charge, else as soon as his crop is ripe it is plundered, and the whole field laid bare. In the precincts of the metropolis they set fire to places during the night, that, under pretence of saving and defending, they may plunder and carry off.

When it suits the Government to enlist rebels or robbers in its service it condones their misdeeds, and confers on them rank and honour. The chief of the Black Flags, who kept up a guerilla war against the French in Tongking, was a recent case in point, as was also, if report speaks truly, the late gallant Admiral Ting, who perished in the Chinese forlorn-hope at Weihai-wei in 1895. The relationship between the authorities and the freebooters is often of so equivocal a character, that foreign naval officers in their crusade against pirates may have failed at times to make the proper discrimination. Vessels seized as pirates occasionally escaped the fate which should have awaited them by proving themselves revenue protectors. But if the Government ever suffered from cases of mistaken identity, the balance was handsomely redressed; for piracy and smuggling being ingeniously blended, the forces of the British colony might in their turn be induced, by information supplied by the Chinese authorities, to act as revenue cruisers, under the belief that they were being led against pirates. The hard fights resulting in the destruction of piratical fleets bearing all the evidences of criminality were, however, too frequent to permit any doubt as to the general character of the craft so treated.

But the anti-piratical agency was not confined to the commissioned officers of her Majesty's navy. Foreigners of all nations were drawn into the coasting traffic, in various capacities, as an antidote to piracy, with benefit, no doubt, to legitimate trade, yet not without some serious drawbacks. Dr Eitel tells us that during the first decade after the war

the waters of Hongkong swarmed with pirates, that the whole coast-line was under the control of a black-mailing confederacy, and that the peaceful trading junk was obliged to be heavily armed, so that externally there was nothing to distinguish a trader from a pirate. During this period European seamen took service with the native pirates who made Hongkong their headquarters, whence they drew their supplies, and where they kept themselves informed as to the movements of valuable merchandise and of war-vessels. Foreigners were enlisted also in the service of the honest trader; Chinese merchants began to charter small European sailing-vessels, for coasting voyages, whereby they gained the protection of a European flag, the prestige of a European crew, and the better sea-going qualities of a European vessel. Steamers also began to be employed to convoy the native junks.

The extension of the convoy system brought in its train the most terrible abuses, the class of foreigners so employed being as ready to sell their services to the pirates as to the merchants, and to turn from protector to oppressor of the honest trader with as much facility as Chinese fishermen and pirates interchange their respective parts. Many tragedies were enacted along the coast and rivers of China—many more, no doubt, than ever became known to the foreign public. Mr Medhurst, consul at Shanghai, said that the foreigners employed by the Chinese to protect their property on the water were guilty of atrocities of all kinds in the inner waters, which the Chinese authorities and people were unable to prevent. And Mr Adkins, consul at Chinkiang on the Yangtze,

reported in the same year, 1862, a series of brutal murders committed by foreigners on the river, with which the native authorities declined to interfere. The criminals, not being amenable to any jurisdiction but their own, were thus left free to commit their outrages, unless some representative of their own country happened to be on the spot. The Taiping rebellion attracted desperate characters from all quarters, to whom it was a matter of indifference under what flag they served — pillage being their sole inducement. The only conspicuous case of trial of a foreigner for piracy was that of a young American, Eli Boggs, who was condemned in the Supreme Court of Hongkong in 1857, and sentenced to transportation for life. From such experiences it is to be apprehended that should any part of the Chinese empire become disorganised, lawless foreigners will be a more terrible scourge to the inhabitants than even the native pirates and bandits.

Of the abuses developed by the convoy system, and of the character of the foreigners concerned therein, a graphic yet matter-of-fact account is given by Wingrove Cooke. As the state of rampant lawlessness which prevailed at the time on the China coast, and the traditional attitude of the Government towards freebooters, are so perfectly illustrated in his concise narrative of the destruction of a Portuguese convoy, no apology is needed for quoting a passage or two from Mr Cooke's letter dated Ningpo, August 24, 1857 :—

The fishing-boats which ply off the mouth of the river Yung pay convoy duties to the extent of 50,000 dollars a-year; and the wood-junks that ply between Ningpo and Foochow, and the

other native craft, raise the annual payment for protection to 200,000 dollars (£70,000) annually. These figures are startling, but I have taken pains to ascertain their correctness.

The vessels employed in this convoy service were Portuguese lorchas. These vessels were well armed and equipped. There were no mandarin junks and no Portuguese ships of war to cope with them or control them, and they became masters of this part of the coast. It is in the nature of things that these privateers should abuse their power. They are accused of the most frightful atrocities. It is alleged that they made descents upon villages, carried off the women, murdered the men, and burnt the habitations. They became infinitely greater scourges than the pirates they were paid to repel. It is alleged, also, that complaints to the Portuguese consul were vain; that Portuguese sailors taken red-handed and handed over to this consul were suffered to escape from the consular prison. Rightly or wrongly, the Chinese thought that the consul was in complicity with the ruffians who were acting both as convoy and as pirates. . . . The leader of the pirate fleet was—I am going back now to a time three years ago—a Cantonese named A'Pak. The authorities at Ningpo, in their weakness, determined to make terms with him rather than submit to the tyranny of the Portuguese.

A'Pak was made a mandarin of the third class; and his fleet—not altogether taken into Government pay, for that the Chinese could not afford—was nominally made over to A'Pak's brother. . . . After a few of these very sanguinary provocations, A'Pak—not, it is believed, without the concurrence of the Taotai of Ningpo—determined to destroy this Portuguese convoy fleet.

For this purpose A'Pak's brother collected his snake-boats and convoy junks from along the whole coast, and assembled about twenty of them, and perhaps 500 men. The Portuguese were not long in hearing of these preparations, but they seem to have been struck with panic. Some of their vessels went south, some were taken at the mouth of the river. Seven lorchas took refuge up the river, opposite the Portuguese consulate. The sailors on board these lorchas landed some of their big guns, and put the consulate in a state of defence, and perhaps hoped that the neighbourhood of the European houses and the character of the consulate would prevent an

attack. Not so. On the day I have above mentioned the Canton fleet came up the river. The Portuguese consul immediately fled. The lorchas fired one broadside at them as they approached, and then the crews deserted their vessels and made for the shore. About 200 Cantonese, accompanied by a few Europeans, followed these 140 Portuguese and Manila-men ashore. A fight took place in the streets. It was of very short duration, for the Portuguese behaved in the most dastardly manner. The Manila-men showed some spirit, but the Portuguese could not even persuade themselves to fight for their lives behind the walls of their consulate. The fortified house was taken and sacked by these Chinamen, the Portuguese were pursued among the tombs, where they sought refuge, and forty of them were shot down, or hunted and butchered with spears.

Merciless as this massacre was, and little as is the choice between the two sets of combatants, it must be owned that the Cantonese acted with purpose and discipline. Three trading Portuguese lorchas which lay in the river with their flags flying were not molested; and no European, not a Portuguese, was even insulted by the infuriated butchers. The stories current of Souero and his Portuguese followers rivalled the worst of the tales of the buccaneers, and public opinion in Ningpo and the foreign settlement was strongly in favour of the Cantonese.

But if Hongkong was the centre of piratical organisation, it was also the centre of effort to put it down. The exploits of her Majesty's ships, destroying many thousands of heavily-armed piratical junks, were loyally supplemented by the legislation and the police of the Colonial Government, which were continuously directed towards the extermination of piracy. These measures, however, did not appear to make any material impression on the pest. As part of his general policy of suppressing crime, the most drastic steps were taken by Sir Richard MacDonnell against pirates. He struck at the root of

the evil within the colony itself by penalising the receivers of stolen goods, and by a stricter surveillance over all Chinese vessels frequenting the harbour. He also endeavoured to secure the co-operation of the Chinese Government, without which no permanent success could be hoped for. This was not, indeed, the first time that Chinese co-operation had been invoked. In one of the hardest fought actions against a piratical stronghold — that of Sheipu Bay, near Ningpo, in 1856 — her Majesty's brig Bittern was towed into action through the bottle-neck of the bay by a Chinese-owned steamer. But the assistance rendered to the Government of Hongkong by the steam-cruisers of the Chinese customs service was of too ambiguous a character to be of real use, smugglers rather than pirates being the object of the Chinese pursuit—smugglers of whom the high Chinese officials had good reason to be jealous.

The result of the police activity and of regulations for the coast traffic was a great diminution in the number of piracy cases brought before colonial magistrates. This, however, by itself was not conclusive as to the actual decrease of the crime, for it may only have indicated a change of strategy forced on the pirates by the vigorous action of the Colonial Government. Foreign vessels were by no means exempt from the attentions of the piratical fleets, though they seldom fell a prey to open assault at sea. A different form of tactics was resorted to where foreigners were the object of attack: it was to embark as passengers a number of the gang with arms secreted, who rose at a signal and massacred the ship's officers. Even after steam ves-

sels had virtually superseded sailers on the coast this device was too often successful through want of care on the part of the master. These attacks were carried out with great skill and daring, sometimes on the short passage of forty miles between Hongkong and Macao, and in several instances almost within the harbour limits of Hongkong itself.

While awarding full credit to the indefatigable exertions of the British squadron in China — the only one that ever troubled itself in such matters —and to the unremitting efforts of the colony of Hongkong, the reduction, if not the extinction, of armed piracy on the coast of China must be attributed largely to the commercial development, in which the extension of the use of steam has played the principal part. Organised by foreigners, and employed by Chinese, lines of powerful steamers have gradually monopolised the valuable traffic, thus rendering the calling of the buccaneer obsolete and profitless. Foreign traders, however, do well not to forget the debt they owe to the institution which they have superseded. But for the pirates, and the scarcely less piratical exactions of officials, the Chinese would not have sought the assistance and the protection of foreign men, foreign ships, or foreign steamers. Piracy has thus not only worked towards its own cure, but has helped to inaugurate an era of prosperous trade, based on the consolidation of the interests of Chinese and foreigners, such as may foreshadow further developments in which the same elements of success may continue in fruitful combination.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARROW WAR, 1856–1860.

Lorchas—Outrage on the Arrow—Question of access to city—Tone of British Foreign Office—Firm tone of British Government—Destruction of Canton factories and flight of foreign residents—Operations in river.

FROM the earliest days of the British occupation it had been the aim of the Canton authorities to destroy the "junk" trade of Hongkong by obstructive regulations, for which the supplementary treaty of 1843 afforded them a certain warrant. But as the Chinese began to settle in large numbers on the island the claims of free commerce asserted themselves, and gradually made headway against the restrictive schemes of the mandarins. The Government fostered the legitimate commercial ambition of the Chinese colonists by passing ordinances whereby they were enabled to register vessels of their own, sail them under the British flag, and trade to such ports as were open to British shipping. Certificates of registry were granted only to men of substance and respectability who were lessees of Crown land in the colony. The class of vessel for which colonial registers were granted was of native build and rig, more or less modified, of good sea-going qualities,

known by the local name of lorcha. Naturally the Canton authorities looked askance at any measure aimed at the liberation of trade, and so truculent an imperial commissioner as Yeh was not likely to miss an opportunity of wreaking vengeance on the "native-born" who dared to exercise privileges derived from residence in the hateful colony.

One of these registered vessels was the Arrow, commanded by an Englishman and manned by Chinese. This vessel was in the course of her traffic boarded at Canton at midday on October 8, 1856, by order of the Chinese authorities, with marked official ostentation, her crew forcibly carried off on a charge, according to a Chinese version, "of being in collusion with barbarians," and her ensign hauled down. How this outrage on the British flag was perpetrated, how resisted, and what came of it, have been so often set forth that there is no need to dwell upon the details here. The traditional insolence of the Chinese was reasserted in all its virulence, as in the days of Commissioner Lin, and once more the British agents were confronted with the dilemma of aggravating past griefs by submission or of putting their foot down and ending them. A single-minded and courageous man was in charge of British interests in Canton, and, left with a free hand, there could be no doubting the line Mr Parkes would take. The decision, however, lay with Sir John Bowring, governor of Hongkong, her Majesty's plenipotentiary and superintendent of trade, and with the naval commander-in-chief, Sir Michael Seymour.

We have seen that the likelihood of sooner or later having to clear accounts with the authorities of Canton

had not been absent from the mind of her Majesty's Government for some years previously, though by no initial act of their own would they have brought the question to a crisis. If the governor entertained doubts whether the Arrow insult furnished adequate provocation, his decision was materially helped by the deadlock in relations which followed. A simple *amende* for the indignity offered to the flag was asked for, such as the Chinese were adepts in devising without "losing face"; but all discussion was refused; the viceroy would not admit any foreign official to a personal conference. The small Arrow question thus became merged in the larger one of access to the city, and to the provincial authorities, which had on various pretexts been denied to the British representatives in contravention of the treaty of 1842.

It happened that the question had lately assumed a somewhat definite place in the agenda of the British plenipotentiary. Lord Clarendon had in 1854 instructed Sir John Bowring to take any opportunity of bringing the "city question" to a solution, and Sir John addressed a long despatch to Commissioner Yeh on the subject in April of that year. It had no effect, and was followed up a few months later by an effort in another direction. The turbulent character of the Cantonese people and the impracticable arrogance of the imperial officers who successively held office there had often prompted an appeal to Cæsar, and more than one attempt had been made in times gone by to submit the Canton grievances to the judgment of the Imperial Court. These attempts were inspired by a total misconception of the relations between the provinces and the capital. In the year 1854, however,

it was decided to renew the effort to open direct communications with the Imperial Government. And circumstances seemed to promise a more favourable issue to the mission than had attended preceding ones. The time had come when a revision of the tariff and commercial articles of the treaties might be claimed, and besides the standing grievance at Canton there were sundry matters in connection with the fulfilment of the treaties which together constituted a justifying pretext for an unarmed expedition to the Peiho. The chances of a favourable reception were thought to be strengthened by the combination of the Treaty Powers. Sir John Bowring and the American Minister, Mr McLane, accordingly went together, with a competent staff of interpreters, to Tientsin, where they were soon followed by the French secretary of Legation.

High officials were appointed to treat with them, because it was feared that if some courtesy were not shown them the barbarians would return south and join the rebels, who were then threatening the southern provinces. But the net result of the mission was that it was allowed to depart in peace. Lord Elgin, commenting on the proceedings, sums up the instructions to the Chinese officials, gathered from the secret reports afterwards discovered, as, "Get rid of the barbarians," which would be an equally exhaustive rendering of all the instructions ever given to Chinese plenipotentiaries. On the occasion of this visit to the Peihò the foreign plenipotentiaries resorted, as had been done on sundry previous occasions, to the oriental custom of approaching a great man gift in hand. In the depleted condition of the imperial treasury they

calculated that the recovery of the duties unpaid during the recent interregnum at Shanghai would be a tempting bait to the Peking Government. The offer, however, could not, it would appear, be intelligibly conveyed to the minds of the northern functionaries: unacquainted with commercial affairs, and misconstruing the proposal as a plea for the forgiveness of arrears, they at once conceded the sop to Cerberus, pleased to have such a convenient way of closing the mouths of the barbarians.

In December following a favourable opportunity seemed to present itself for renewing the attack on the exclusiveness of Canton. The Taiping rebels had blockaded the river, and in a "pitched battle" defeated the imperialist fleet and were actually threatening the city. In this emergency Yeh implored the aid of the English forces. Sir John Bowring thereupon proceeded to Canton with a naval force of five ships to protect the foreign factories, the presence of the squadron having at the same time the desired deterrent effect on the rebels, who withdrew their forces. Now at last the governor felt confident that the barrier to intercourse was removed, and he applied to the viceroy for an interview; but Yeh remained obdurate, refused audience as before, and with all the old contumely. Precisely the same thing had happened in the north in 1853, when the governor of Kiangsu applied through Consul Alcock to the superintendent of trade, Sir George Bonham, for the assistance of one of her Majesty's ships in defending Nanking against the expected attack of the Taipings. Divers communications of like tenor had, during several months, led up to this definite application. The appeal

was most urgent, and yet in the title given to her Majesty's plenipotentiary the two important characters had been omitted, indicating that his power emanated from the ruler of an "independent sovereign state." "Such an omission," remarked Mr Alcock, "is characteristic of the race we have to deal with, for even in a time of danger to the national existence they cannot suppress their arrogance and contempt for barbarians." Arrogant and contemptuous of course they were, and yet it may perhaps be questioned whether such terms fully explain the mutilation of the plenipotentiary's official titles. Although they had been compelled by mechanical force to accord titles implying equality to foreign officials, yet in the innermost conviction of the Chinese an independent sovereign State was at that time almost unthinkable, and could only be expressed by a solecism. If, therefore, we ask how an imperial commissioner could demean himself by soliciting protection from the barbarians to whom he was denying the scantiest courtesy, we have to consider the point of view from which China had from time immemorial and without challenge regarded all the outer States. For it is the point of view that is paradoxical. To Yeh, considering barbarians merely as refractory subjects, there was no inconsistence in commanding their aid, while denying their requests. The position is analogous to that of Ultramontanes, who claim tolerance for themselves in heretical communities by a divine right which excludes the idea of reciprocity. This key to the history of foreign intercourse with China is too often forgotten.

Nothing daunted, Sir John returned to the charge in June 1855, on the occasion of the appointment of

the new consul, Mr Alcock, whom he asked permission to introduce to the Imperial Commissioner. His letter was not even acknowledged for a month, and then in the usual contemptuous terms.

So far, indeed, from Yeh's being mollified by the assistance indirectly accorded to him in defending the city from rebel attack, or by the succession of respectful appeals made to him by Sir John Bowring, a new campaign of aggression was inaugurated against the lives and liberties of the foreign residents in Canton. This followed the traditional course. Inflammatory placards denouncing foreigners; and holding them up to the odium of the populace, were extensively posted about the city and suburbs in the summer of 1856. These, as usual, were followed by personal attacks on isolated Englishmen found defenceless, and, following the precedents of ten years before, the outbreaks of anti-foreign feeling in Canton found their echo also in Foochow, where an American gentleman met his death in a riot which was got up there in July. So serious was the situation becoming that Mr Consul Parkes, who had succeeded Mr Alcock in June, solemnly warned the Imperial Commissioner that such acts, if not promptly discountenanced by the authorities (who of course were well known to be the instigators), must inevitably lead to deplorable consequences. The Chinese reply to this remonstrance was the outrage on the lorcha Arrow. To isolate that incident, therefore, would be wholly to miss the significance of it: it would be to mistake the match for the mine.

Those who were on the spot and familiar with antecedent events could have no doubt whatever that,

in condoning the present insults, the British authorities would have invited greater and always greater, as in the days of Lin. The tone of recent despatches from the Foreign Office fortified the governor in taking a strong resolution; the clearness of Consul Parkes' view made also a deep impression on him; and yet another factor should not be altogether overlooked which contributed its share in bringing the two responsible officials to a definite decision. It was not an unknown phenomenon in public life that two functionaries whose co-operation was essential should mistrust each other. This was distinctly the case with Sir John Bowring and Sir Michael Seymour. They needed some connecting medium to make them mutually intelligible, and it was found in the influence of local public opinion. The mercantile community, which for twenty years, or as long as they had had utterance, had never wavered in the conviction that in strength alone lay their safety, were to a man for vigorous measures at Canton. And it happened that, scarcely perceived either by themselves or by the other parties concerned, they possessed a special channel for bringing the force of their views to bear on the two responsible men. Sir John Bowring had himself deplored "the enormous influence wielded by the great and opulent commercial houses" when adverse to his projects. He was now to experience that influence in another sense, without perhaps recognising it, for when the wind is fair it makes slight impression on those whose sails it fills.

Among the business houses in China two stood pre-eminent. One had a son of the plenipotentiary

for partner; both were noted for their princely hospitality, especially to officers of the navy. "Those princely merchants, Dent & Co., as well as Matheson," writes Admiral Keppel in his Diary, "kept open house. They lived in palaces." One of the two buildings occupied by the former firm, "Kiying House," which some twenty years later became the Hongkong Hotel, was as good as a naval club for all ranks, while admirals and post-captains found snug anchorage within the adjoining domain of the seniors of the firm. The two great houses did not always pull together, but on this occasion their separate action, converging on a single point, was more effectual than any half-hearted combination could have been. Night after night was the question of Canton discussed with slow deliberation and accumulating emphasis in the executive and the administrative, the naval and the political, camps respectively. Conviction was imbibed with the claret and cheroots, and it was not altogether without reason that what followed has sometimes been called the "Merchants' War."

The die was cast. The great Canton bubble, the bugbear of a succession of British Governments and representatives, was at last to be pricked, though with a delay which, however regrettable at the time, perhaps conduced to greater thoroughness in the long-run. Those of our readers who desire to trace the various operations against Canton during the twelve months which followed cannot do better than consult Mr Stanley Lane-Poole's 'Life of Sir Harry Parkes,' the volume of 'Times' correspondence by that sage observer and vivacious narrator, Mr Wingrove

Cooke, and the delightful sailor's book recently published by Vice-Admiral Sir W. R. Kennedy. The campaign unfolded itself in a drama of surprises. The force at the admiral's disposal being too small to follow up the initial movement against the city, which gave no sign of yielding by first intention, Sir Michael Seymour had to content himself with intimating to the Viceroy Yeh that, notwithstanding his Excellency's interdict, he had, with a guard of bluejackets, visited the Viceregal Yamên; and with keeping hostilities alive by a blockade of the river while awaiting reinforcements.

The Arrow incident occurred in October. In December the foreign factories were burned by the Chinese, and the Viceroy Yeh issued proclamations offering rewards for English heads. The mercantile community retired to Hongkong, a few to the quieter retreat of Macao. The vengeance of Commissioner Yeh pursued them exactly as that of Commissioner Lin had done in 1839. Assassinations were not infrequent on the outskirts of the city of Victoria; and in January 1857 the principal baker in the colony was induced to put a sack of arsenic into his morning supply of bread, which only failed of its effect through the excess of the dose acting as an emetic.

The early portion of the year 1857 was enlivened by active operations in hunting out Chinese war-junks in the various creeks and branches of the river, commenced by Commodore Elliot and continued on a brilliant scale by Commodore H. Keppel, who arrived opportunely in the frigate Raleigh, of which he speaks with so much pride and affection in his Memoirs. That

fine vessel, however, was lost on a rock approaching Macao, sinking in shallow water in the act of saluting the French flag, a war vessel of that nationality having been descried in the anchorage. The commodore and his officers and crew, thus detached, were soon accommodated with small craft good for river service, and in a very short time they made a memorable cutting-out expedition as far as the city of Fatshan, destroying formidable and well-posted fleets of war-junks in what the commodore described as "one of the prettiest boat actions recorded in naval history." Sir W. Kennedy served as a midshipman in those expeditions, and his descriptions supply a much-needed supplement to that of the Admiral of the Fleet, correcting it in some particulars and filling in the gaps in a wonderfully realistic manner. No adequate estimate can be formed of the importance of the year's operations in the Canton river without reading Admiral Kennedy's brilliant but simple story.

The Canton imbroglio made the kind of impression that such occurrences are apt to do in England. The merits of the case being usually ignored, the bare incidents furnish convenient weapons with which to assail the Government that happens to be in office. Under such conditions statements can be made and arguments applied with all the freedom of a debating club. The Arrow trouble occasioned a temporary fusion of the most incongruous elements in English politics. When Lord Derby, Lord Lyndhurst, Bishop Wilberforce, Mr Cobden, Mr Bright, Mr Gladstone, and Mr Disraeli were found banded together as one man, it was neither common knowledge nor any sincere interest in the question at issue, but "unanimosity" towards the Premier,

that inspired them. The Opposition orators took their brief from the published despatches of Commissioner Yeh, which they assumed as the starting-point of the China question, and found no difficulty whatever in discovering all the nobility and good faith on the Chinese side, the perfidy and brutality on the side of the British representative. Though successful in carrying a vote of censure on the Government, the attitude of the Coalition did not impress the public, and Lord Palmerston's appeal to the electorate was responded to by his being returned to power by a large majority.

How very little the question itself affected public men in England may be inferred from the notices of it in the Memoirs, since published, of leading statesmen of the period. The fate of China, or of British commerce there, was not in their minds at all, their horizon being bounded by the immediate fate of the Ministry, to them the be-all and end-all of national policy. What deplorable consequences all over the world have arisen from the insouciance of British statesmen as regards all matters outside the arena of their party conflicts!

Sir John Bowring was made the scapegoat of the war. A philosophical Radical, he had been president of the Peace Society, and his quondam friends could not forgive a doctrinaire who yielded to the stern logic of facts. As consul at Canton he had had better opportunities of studying the question of intercourse with the Chinese than any holder of his office either before or since his time. No one had worked more persistently for the exercise of the right of entry into Canton. Superseded in the office

of plenipotentiary by the appointment of the Earl of Elgin as High Commissioner for Great Britain, Sir John Bowring remained Governor of Hongkong, and it fell to him to "do the honours" to his successor, from whom he received scant consideration. Indeed Lord Elgin made no secret of his aversion to the colony and all its concerns, and marked his feeling towards the governor by determining that he should never see the city of Canton—that Promised Land so soon to be opened to the world through Sir John's instrumentality.

I. THE EARL OF ELGIN AND HIS MISSION.

Capture of Canton—The Treaty of Tientsin—Comments on the treaty—Sequel to the treaty—Omission to visit Peking—Comments thereon—How to deal with Chinese—Commissioners to Shanghai to negotiate the tariff—Two pressing questions to be settled—Delay of Commissioners' arrival—Resentment of Lord Elgin and change of tactics *re* Canton—Canton question same as Chinese question—Chinese demand for abandonment of Resident Minister—Lord Elgin's assent—Comments thereon—Treaty with Japan—The Taku disaster.

The transports bringing the troops from England were meanwhile hurrying at top speed—not in those days a very high one—round the Cape of Good Hope, and the navy was being reinforced by several powerful ships, including the mosquito squadron of gunboats which were destined to play so useful a part, first in the operations of war, and subsequently in patrolling the coast and rivers for the protection of peaceful traders. Lord Elgin's arrival in Hongkong, coinciding in time with that of the frigates Shannon, commanded by Sir William Peel, and Pearl, Captain

Sotheby, put heart into the long-suffering British community at the port. But sinister news from India had reached Lord Elgin on his voyage to China, in consequence of which, and on the urgent request of the Governor-General, he took on himself to intercept the troopships wherever they could be met with, and turn their course to Calcutta. Before he had been many days in Hongkong, foreseeing an indefinite period of inaction in China, and being obliged in any case to wait the arrival of his French colleague, without whom no French co-operation could be had, Lord Elgin determined to proceed himself to Calcutta, taking with him the two frigates Shannon and Pearl. This welcome reinforcement not only arrived opportunely in India, but, as is well known, did heroic service in throwing back the tide of mutiny.

Fortune seemed in all this to be favouring the Chinese, nothing more hurtful threatening them than a passive blockade of the Canton river and its branches. But a fresh expedition was promptly despatched from England to take the place of that which had been diverted to India. A body of 1500 marines arrived in the autumn, and on them, supplemented by the Hongkong garrison, devolved the duty of bringing China to terms, the navy, of course, being the essential arm in all these operations.

Lord Elgin returned to China in ample time to meet the French plenipotentiary, Baron Gros. His lordship's policy had from the first been an interesting theme for speculation, not less so as the time for putting it in force drew near. It had been surmised that his object would be to leave Canton alone, and set out on another wild-goose chase to the north.

That so futile a scheme should not be carried out without at least a protest, the mercantile community met Lord Elgin on his arrival in June with an address couched in the following terms:—

> We venture upon no opinion at present respecting the readjustment of our relations with the empire at large, though always prepared to hold our advice and experience at your lordship's command; but upon that branch of the question which we distinguish as the "Canton difficulty" we would take this, the earliest opportunity, of recording our opinion—an opinion founded upon long, reluctant, and, we may add, traditional experience—that any compromise of it, or any sort of settlement which shall stop short of the complete humiliation of the Cantonese,—which shall fail to teach them a wholesome respect for the obligations of their own Government in its relations with independent Powers, and a more hospitable reception of the foreigner who resorts to their shores for the peaceable purposes of trade,—will only result in further suffering to themselves and further disastrous interruptions to us.
>
> Many of us have already been heavy sufferers by the present difficulty. It must be apparent to your lordship that our best interests lie upon the side of peace, and upon the earliest solid peace that can be obtained. But, notwithstanding this, we would most earnestly deprecate any settlement of the question which should not have eliminated from it the very last element of future disorder.

The meaning of these weighty words, as interpreted by Wingrove Cooke, was, "You must take Canton, my lord, and negotiate at Peking with Canton in your possession." And he adds, "Such is the opinion of every one here, from the highest to the lowest." We learn from his private letters that it was by no means the opinion of the new plenipotentiary. "The course I am about to follow," he writes, "does not square with the views of the merchants." Yet his reply to

their address was so diplomatic that he was able to say "it gave them for the moment wonderful satisfaction." The editor of Lord Elgin's letters suppresses the rest of the sentence. The new plenipotentiary hoped even "to conclude a treaty in Shanghai, and hasten home afterwards,"—a hope which could only coexist with an entire disregard of our whole previous experience in China; almost, one might argue, with an entire ignorance of the record.[1]

On his return from India, however, and on the assembling of the Allied forces, he found that the course prescribed by history and common-sense was, after all, the only practical one to follow, and that was to commence hostilities at Canton. Yet Lord Elgin seems to have submitted to the inexorable demands of circumstances with no very good grace. Indeed his attitude towards the Canton overture and his mission generally was decidedly anomalous. The two leading ideas running through the published portion of his correspondence were, "It revolts me, but I do it"; and, "Get the wretched business over and hurry home." Lord Elgin's mental constitution, as such, is of no interest to us except as it affected his acts and left its impress on the national interests in China. From that point of view, however, it is public property, and as much an ingredient in the history as any other quality of the makers of it. First, we find him at variance with the Government which commissioned him, in that he speaks with shame of his mission: "That wretched question of the Arrow is a scandal to us." Why?

[1] "Verily," writes Wingrove Cooke, "Sir John Bowring, much abused as he is both here and at home, has taken a more common-sense view of these matters than the high diplomatists of England and France."

Her Majesty's Government had deliberated maturely on the Arrow question, had referred it to their law officers, had concluded it was a good case, and had written unreservedly in that sense to their representative in China. Was it, then, greater knowledge, or superior judgment, that inspired Lord Elgin to an opposite opinion? And in either case would it not have been better to have had the point cleared up before undertaking the mission?

But, in point of fact, the Arrow question was not the question with which Lord Elgin had to deal, as it had long before been merged, as we have said, into the much larger one of our official relations with China.

The truth seems to be that Lord Elgin came to China filled with the conviction that in all our disputes the Chinese had been the oppressed and we the oppressors. Of our intercourse with them he had nothing more complimentary or more definite to say than that it was "scandalous." For his own countrymen he had never a good word, for the Chinese nothing but good—until they came into collision with himself, when they at once became "fools and tricksters." Having assembled a hostile force in front of Canton, he writes, December 22, 1857, "I never felt so ashamed of myself in my life. . . . When I look at that town I feel that I am earning for myself a place in the Litany immediately after 'plague, pestilence, and famine.'" Becoming gradually reconciled to events, however, he writes, "If we can take the city without much massacre I shall think the job a good one, because no doubt the relations of the Cantonese with the foreign population were very unsatisfactory."

But why "massacre," much or little? It was but a phantasy of his own he was thus deprecating. The curious point is, however, that Lord Elgin imagined that everybody was bent on this massacre except himself, and when all was over, and "there never was a Chinese town which suffered so little by the occupation of a hostile force," he appropriates the whole credit for this satisfactory issue! "If," he writes, "Yeh had surrendered on the mild demand made upon him, I should have brought on my head the imprecations both of the navy and the army, and of the civilians, the time being given by the missionaries and the women." An insinuation so purely hypothetical and so sweeping would not be seriously considered in any relation of life whatsoever; but no one who knows either the navy or the army would hesitate to affirm that the humanity of every officer and man in these services was as much beyond reproach as Lord Elgin's own, albeit it might assume a different form of expression. When the city, "doomed to destruction from the folly of its own rulers and the vanity and levity of ours," had been occupied, and the bugbear of massacre had vanished, the object of Lord Elgin's sympathies became shifted: "I could not help feeling melancholy when I thought that we were so ruthlessly destroying"—not the place or the people, but—"the prestige of a place which has been for so many centuries intact and undefiled by the stranger." Had he written this after witnessing some of the horrors of the city described by Wingrove Cooke, possibly these regrets for its defilement might have been less poignant. But though reverence for the mere antiquity of China is a most salutary lesson to inculcate in these our days, it is

pathetic to see the particular man whose mission was to humble her historical prestige tortured by compunctions for what he is doing. One is tempted to wish the "job" had been intrusted to more commonplace hands.

Some of those English officials by whose vanity and levity the "city was doomed to destruction" were also writing their private letters, and this was the purport. "I confidently hope," wrote Mr Parkes, before Lord Elgin's first arrival in China, "that a satisfactory adjustment of all difficulties may be attained with a slight effusion of blood. Canton, it is true, must fall. I see no hope of any arrangement being arrived at without this primary step being effected, but I trust that with the fall of that city hostilities may end, and that the emperor may then consent to receive a representative at Peking." However, as soon as he gets to actual business with the Chinese, Lord Elgin finds that he also has to be stern even as others. As early as January 10, 1858, a week after the occupation of the city, "I addressed the governor in a pretty arrogant tone. I did so out of kindness, as I now know what fools they are, and what calamities they bring upon themselves, or rather on the wretched people, by their pride and trickery." But what the novice was only beginning to find out the veterans had learned years before.[1]

His attitude to his countrymen generally is scarcely less censorious than towards the officials who had borne,

[1] Before the conclusion of his second mission Lord Elgin's opinion of at least one of those whom at the outset he disparaged had undergone considerable modification. "Parkes," he wrote in 1860, "is one of the most remarkable men I ever met for energy, courage, and ability combined. I do not know where I could find his match."

and were yet to bear, the burden and heat of the day in China. From Calcutta he wrote :—

It is a terrible business being among inferior races. I have seldom from man or woman since I came to the East heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the object.

From China :—

The whole world just now is raving mad with a passion for killing and slaying, and it is difficult for a person in his sober senses, like myself, to keep his own among them.

Again :—

I have seen more to disgust me with my fellow-countrymen than I saw during the whole course of my previous life. . . . I have an instinct in me which loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and all this keeps me in a perpetual boil. . . . The tone of the two or three men connected with mercantile houses in China whom I find on board is all for blood and massacre on a great scale.

The perennial fallacy that underlies the "one-righteous-man" theory from the days of Elijah the Tishbite downwards, and the ineptitude of all indiscriminate invective, would be sufficient answer to such sweeping maledictions. Below these ebullitions of the surface, however, there lay a grave misgiving in Lord Elgin's mind concerning his mission as a whole, in which many thoughtful people must have shared: "Whose work are we engaged in when we burst thus with hideous violence and brutal energy into these darkest and most mysterious recesses of the traditions of the past?" This was written at Tientsin after the passage of the forts, and it is well worth recalling, now that the

vultures of Europe are wheeling round the moribund empire.

Canton city was occupied by the Allies on January 2, 1858. Commissioner Yeh was captured, carried on board the paddle-sloop Inflexible, and conveyed to Calcutta, where he eventually died. His absence made it easier to deal with the other authorities. He is perhaps the only Chinese official who has ever been made personally responsible for attacks on foreigners.

A provisional government was established under three commissioners nominated by the Allied commanders-in-chief, though in fact the labour and responsibility rested solely on one of the three, Mr Parkes. Having induced the native governor, Pikwei, to resume his functions and administer the affairs of the city, under supervision, order was partially established, and the chiefs, diplomatic and military, withdrew — much too abruptly, it was generally thought — to prepare an expedition to the north.

But the commissioners were left with inadequate forces to maintain order, fettered as they were by instructions which rendered them immobile. The British admiral, after nearly a year and a half's experience in the river, might have known something of the Canton problem, while the Allied plenipotentiaries apparently understood nothing of it. This was shown by what contemporary opinion designated Lord Elgin's "first symptom of weakness." When the figurehead Pikwei was brought from his prison to be invested with authority under the Allied commanders he coolly claimed precedence of the English admiral and general, and Lord Elgin, contrary to his own pre-arrangement of seats, &c., conceded the claim, thereby striking the key-

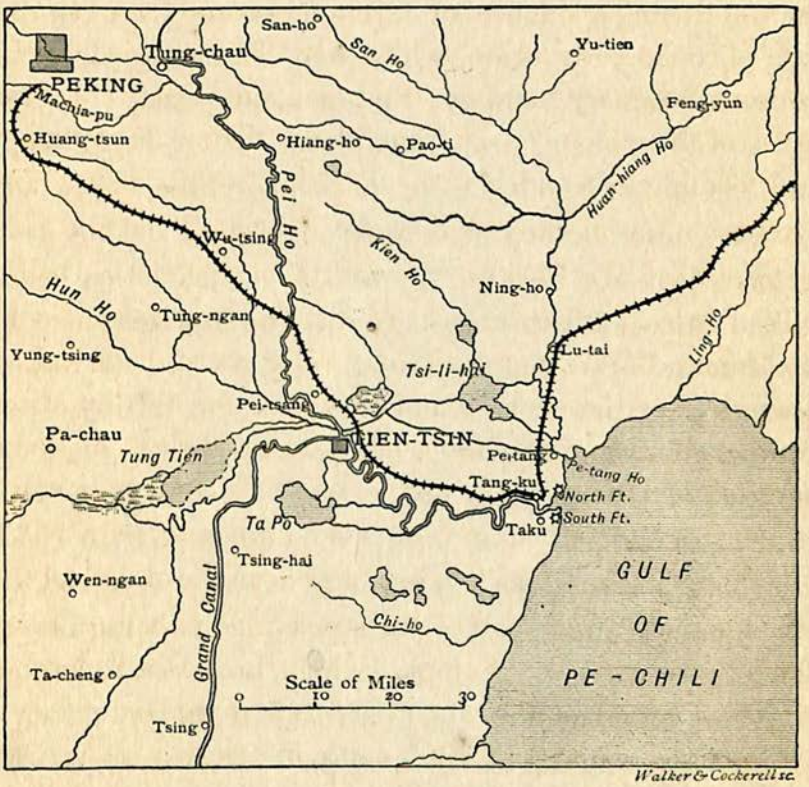
note of the relations which were to exist between the Allied commissioners and the Chinese officials. Lord Elgin had occasion to remember this when, in 1860, Prince Kung tried to lead him into a similar trap, whereby he himself would have been relegated to a second place. The result of these arrangements was very much what might have been expected. Finding the foreign garrison passive, the turbulent elements in the city and the surrounding villages soon began to fan the embers of their former fires. They refused to consider themselves conquered, and set about reorganising their forces as they had done on previous occasions, and, beginning with secret schemes of assassination, they became emboldened by impunity, and by-and-by mustered courage to attack and annoy the garrison of the city, which was as helpless to repel insults as the mounted sentries at the Horse Guards. The army of occupation was besieged, the prestige of the capture of the city was in a few months wholly dissipated, and the officials and gentry affected to believe that the barbarians were only in the river, their presence in the city being ostentatiously ignored in public correspondence. During the whole of the year 1858 the cry went up continuously from the commissioners and military commanders, but it remained practically unheeded by the chiefs in the far north, except in so far that they drew still shorter the tether of the beleaguered force, in order that they might avoid all possible collision with their Chinese assailants. Lord Elgin at first deemed the turbulence at Canton a good reason for effecting a speedy settlement with the Imperial Government; but, as we shall see presently, that settlement when made had no influence at all upon

either the Government officials or the gentry and populace of that city. The solution of the Canton problem was found in an entirely different direction.

It may be mentioned here that besides the administration of the city, several important matters of business were arranged during the commissionership of Mr Parkes. There was the question of the site at Shameen for the future residence of foreigners; and the regulation of coolie emigration, which had been carried on in an unsatisfactory manner; and last, not least, the first lease of Kowloon, on the mainland facing Hongkong, and forming one side of the harbour. This important concession, as already said, was negotiated on the sole initiative of Mr Parkes, the military authorities being talked into it afterwards. It was the first response to the demand of Wingrove Cook, Why we had not taken possession of the peninsula of Kowloon, for "if any other Powers should do so—and what is to prevent them—the harbour of Hongkong is lost to us." Several important exploratory expeditions were also undertaken in 1859, in which Parkes was everywhere warmly received by officials and people, one of these excursions being far up the West river, the opening of which, however, to foreign trade remained in abeyance for forty years thereafter.

The next object of the plenipotentiaries, of course, was to negotiate at Peking, or wherever properly accredited negotiators could be met with, Canton being held in pledge. Progress was slow, because the fleet was so largely composed of sailing-vessels, which must wait for the fair monsoon; and the plenipotentiaries did not assemble within the river Peiho—the forts at its mouth having been silenced and the guns captured—until June. There followed Lord Elgin to Tientsin the

French, American, and Russian Ministers, all bent on making treaties and on observing each other. The resources of Chinese resistance having been provisionally exhausted, imperial commissioners came to arrest the further progress of the foreigners by negotiations, or, to speak with strict accuracy, to concede



ROADS AND WATERWAYS BETWEEN PEKING AND TIENTSIN.

the minimum that was necessary to induce them to depart. Such, we may be sure, was the beginning and the end of their instructions then, as it was afterwards. The work of negotiation, so far as the form went, seems to have fallen to Mr H. N. Lay, whose place was very soon to know him no more;

but, in the words of Lord Elgin, "anybody could have made the treaty."

The contents of the treaty, signed June 26, 1858, fulfilled the instructions of Lord Clarendon, and the commercial articles which constituted its main body corresponded substantially with the desiderata of the merchants as set forth in their memorials in response to the invitation of Lord Elgin, the treaty going in advance of their demands on certain points and falling short of them on others. Opium was not mentioned, but was afterwards placed on the tariff; and a toleration clause for the Christian religion was inserted, without much apparent consideration for the consequences involved in it. A special memorandum from Consul Alcock, called for by the Foreign Office, had dwelt mainly on the precautions which should accompany the exercise of such new privileges as promiscuous residence in the interior; but, excepting in the case of merchants, where little or no risk was involved, the warnings of Mr Alcock were unheeded alike in the text of the treaty and in the subsidiary regulations.

"The most important matter gained by the treaty," however, in the opinion of Lord Elgin, was "the resident Minister at Peking," "without which," wrote Mr Parkes, "the treaty was not worth a straw." And substituting "lost" for "gained," such was also the opinion of the Chinese negotiators. It was, indeed, the universal opinion. Diplomatic representation at Peking might be fairly considered to have been the primary object of the war of 1857-58, as commercial extension and access to Canton had been that of 1839-42. And when "the miserable war was finished" and "his liberty regained" Lord Elgin cleared out his force, bag and baggage, as if

he had been escaping from something, leaving not a trace behind.

As this move constituted a veritable crisis in Anglo-Chinese relations, it seems advisable for a moment to consider its bearings. Judging after the event, it is of course easy to perceive the fatal error of Lord Elgin in hurrying away from the Peiho. A fair criticism of his policy will confine itself strictly to the circumstances as known at the time. His experience had so closely resembled that of his predecessors, that he was aware that the Chinese were "yielding nothing to reason and everything to fear." He had seen with his own eyes the Queen's ratifications of previous treaties exhumed from a collection of miscellaneous papers in Canton, they being, as Commissioner Yeh remarked, not worth sending to Peking; he knew that the treaty of Nanking had been observed by the Chinese only as far as force or fear compelled them, and that its crucial stipulation had been for many years evaded, and then with unmasked arrogance repudiated; he knew that the very war in which he had been engaged, and his whole mission to China, were caused and provoked by the refusal of the provincial authorities to admit his predecessors or himself within the walls of Canton. In his own ultimatum to Commissioner Yeh, Lord Elgin had asked no more than the execution of the treaty of Nanking, which included access to the city of Canton, and compensation for damage to British property. Yet the Chinese Government, dreading war as they did, had notwithstanding incurred its hazards rather than open the gates of a distant provincial city. How, then, were they likely to regard the, to them, infinitely greater

outrage of resident foreign Ministers in the sacred capital itself? This demand was practically the only one against which the Chinese commissioners made a stand. When everything had been written down ready for signature they drew back, saying it was as much as their heads were worth to subscribe such a condition. The answer was a peremptory threat to march on Peking, whereupon the commissioners signed the paper without another word. The crisis did not last twenty-four hours. No one could believe that a miracle of conversion had been wrought in that time, or that the enforced signature of the Imperial Commissioners had changed a fundamental principle of Chinese policy. What, under these circumstances, was the "present value" of the treaty? Was it so much as conceivable that it would be voluntarily carried out? Was it not evident rather that it was signed under *duresse* solely with the immediate view of getting the barbarians out of doors and leaving the key within? What said the imperial decree published in the 'Peking Gazette'? "The barbarians[1] had come headlong with their ships to Tientsin. Moved by the commands of Kweiliang and his colleagues, they have now weighed anchor and stood out to sea." If our former treaty needed a material guarantee for its execution, how much more this one? The test of good faith was in Lord Elgin's own hands; he should clearly have applied it, and presented himself at Peking for audience of the emperor. Perhaps it would have been refused, in which case he would have at least known where he stood. A cam-

[1] Lord Elgin protested against the use of this tabooed term, but took no exception to the statement as to his having obeyed the commands of the Imperial Commissioners.

paign against Peking would have been easy with the handy force he possessed, or at the worst he could have occupied Tientsin and the Taku forts until all questions were settled.

This was the view generally held at the time both by officials and the lay community in China, before any untoward consequences had revealed themselves. It was strongly expressed by Parkes, who deplored "the ominous omission that Lord Elgin had gone away to Japan without entering Peking or having an audience with the emperor." We have not the advantage of knowing what Wingrove Cooke would have said of it, but we may infer the prevailing opinion by what another newspaper correspondent wrote from Shanghai on the receipt of the first news of the signing of the treaty :—

SHANGHAI, *July* 13, 1858.[1]

The "Chinese War," properly so called, has now reached its termination, and the fleet in the Gulf of Pechili is dispersing. Lord Elgin arrived here yesterday with the new treaty, which his brother, the Hon. F. Bruce, carries home by the present mail. The document will not be published until it is ratified by the Queen, but in the mean time the chief points of it may be tolerably well guessed at. The diplomatists are confident that the new treaty will "give satisfaction." That is saying a good deal, but how could it be otherwise than satisfactory? The emperor was so terror-struck by our audacious advance on Tientsin, that he was ready to concede everything we wanted rather than see us approach any nearer to his capital. There could have been but little discussion—the ambassadors had simply to make their terms. The new treaty, then, provides for indemnification for losses at Canton, a contribution towards the expenses of the war (for which Canton is held as a guarantee), the opening of more ports for trade, freedom of access to the interior, toleration for Christians, and a resident

[1] 'The Scotsman,' September 18, 1858.

Minister at Peking. The only omission seems to be that Lord Elgin did not himself go to Peking; for unless the right of residence at the capital receives a practical recognition from the Chinese Government at once, it will certainly lead to vexatious discussion whenever we wish to exercise it. The right of entry into Canton, conceded by the treaty of Nanking, but not insisted on through the timidity of our representatives, ought to have taught us a useful lesson. While the emperor is in a state of alarm anything may be done with him, but when the pressure is removed and the fleet dispersed, Pharaoh's heart will certainly be hardened, and then Chinese ingenuity will be employed in evading as many of the provisions of the treaty as they dare. Let us hope, however, that when the weather cools a little and the thing can be done comfortably, Lord Elgin may still pay a friendly visit to his new allies at their headquarters [which he more than once threatened to do].

Such was contemporary opinion unbiassed as yet by visible effects. When the tragedy took place a year later, of course people spoke out more clearly. Parkes then wrote:—

The Chinese Government never intended, nor do they intend, if they can avoid it, to carry out the Elgin treaty. It was granted by them against their will, and we omitted all precautions necessary to ensure its being carried out—I mean, in quitting Tientsin as we did in July 1858, instead of remaining there until the treaty had been actually carried into effect. You will recollect in what a hurry the admiral and Lord Elgin, one and all, were to leave and run off to recreate in Japan and elsewhere. By that step they just undid all they had previously done.

Writing eighteen months after the event, and six months after the Taku repulse, Laurence Oliphant fully confirmed the views of Parkes. "The political importance," he observed, "of such an achievement"—*i.e.*, a march to Peking—"it is impossible to overestimate. The much-vexed question of the reception of a

British Minister at the capital would have been set at rest for ever." He then goes on to give a number of exculpatory reasons for the omission, which would have been more convincing had they been stated by Lord Elgin himself in despatches written at the time.

Nor was Lord Elgin's own explanation to the House of Lords any more satisfying. "In point of fact," he said, "I was never charged with the ratification of the treaty. The treaty was never placed in my possession. I never had the option of going to Peking." If his lordship had had a better case he would never have elected to rest his vindication on a piece of verbal finesse. Yet this speech gave their Lordships for the moment "wonderful satisfaction."[1]

The omission to consummate the treaty was followed a few months later by an act of commission of which it is difficult to render any clear account, and which Oliphant in his 'Narrative' makes no attempt to explain, merely reproducing the official despatches. Before leaving China Lord Elgin pulled the key-stone from the arch of his own work, reducing the treaty to that condition which Parkes had described as "not worth a straw." At the instance of the Chinese commissioners he moved her Majesty's Government to suspend the operation of "the most important" article in it, the residence of a British Minister in Peking. It is needless to follow the arguments, utterly unreal and having no root either in history or in experience, by which this fatal course was urged upon the Government, for they were of the same species as those which had induced

[1] It seems to have been a general opinion at the time that Lord Elgin was deterred from proceeding to Peking by the protestations of his learned advisers, who declared that his doing so would "shatter the empire."

her Majesty's Ministers to tolerate for fourteen years the exclusion of their representatives from Canton, the right to enter which city had just been recovered by force. It is most instructive to mark, as the key to many failures, how, like successive generations of youth, successive British agents in China have failed to profit by the experience of their predecessors, and have had in so many cases to buy their own at the expense of their country; for we see still the same thing indefinitely repeating itself, like a recurring decimal. Even at this the end of the nineteenth century we seem as far off as ever from laying hold of any saving principle, though it stares at us out of the whole panorama of our intercourse. Lord Elgin's procedure afforded at once the best example what to do and the clearest warning what to avoid in China, and it is the most useful for future guidance for the reason that effect followed cause as closely as report follows flash. It was his fate, much against his will apparently, to wage war on China in order to revindicate a right which had lapsed through the weakness and wrong-headedness of certain British representatives; yet in the closing act of a perfectly successful war he commits the self-same error on a more comprehensive scale, entailing on some future Government and plenipotentiary the necessity of making yet another war on China to recover what he was giving away. What is the explanation of this continuous repetition of the same mistake? It would seem that, knowing nothing of the Chinese, yet imagining they know something, the representatives of Great Britain and of other Powers, notably the United States, have been in the habit of evolving from their own consciousness and

keeping by them a subjective Chinaman with whom they play "dummy," and of course "score horribly," as the most recent diplomatic slang has it. Their despatches are full of this game—of reckoning without their host, who, when brought to book, turns out to be a wholly different personage from the intelligent automaton kept for Cabinet use. Then, under the shock of this discovery, denunciations of treachery—black, base, and so forth—relieve the feelings of the foiled diplomat, while the substance of his previous triumph has quite eluded him. To this kind of illusion Lord Elgin was by temperament more predisposed than perhaps any of his predecessors save Captain Elliot. Though convinced by his first encounter that Chinese statesmen were "fools and tricksters," the simulacrum soon asserted supremacy over the actuality of experience, and to the honour of the very persons so stigmatised he committed the interests of his country, abandoning all the securities which he held in his hand.

But what, then, is the secret of dealing with the Chinese which so many able men, not certainly intending to make failures, have missed? This interesting question is thus partially answered by Wingrove Cooke. "The result of all I hear and see," he wrote, "is a settled conviction that at present we know nothing—absolutely nothing—of the nature of those elements which are at work inside China. Crotchets, &c., are rife, but they are all the offspring of vain imaginings, not sober deductions from facts. . . . Treat John Chinaman as a man, and exact from him the duties of a civilised man, and you will have no more trouble with him." Which is but a paraphrase of Lord Palmerston's

prescription to consider the Chinese as "not greatly different from the rest of mankind." Such, however, has always been too simple a formula for the smaller minds. They would complicate it by trying, with ludicrous effect, to get behind the brain of the Chinese and play their opponent's hand as well as their own. Probably it matters less on what particular footing we deal with the Chinese than the consistency with which we adhere to it. To treat them as *protégés*, and excuse them as minors or imbeciles while yet allowing them the full licence and privileges of the adult and the sane, is manifestly absurd. To treat them as dependent and independent at the same time can lead to nothing but confusion and violent injustice. To allow engagements with them to become waste paper is the surest road to their ruin and our discomfiture. To let our Yea be Yea, and our Nay, Nay, is as much the Law and the Prophets in China as it is throughout the world of diplomacy. To this simplicity Lord Elgin had attained, at least in theory, when he told the merchants of Shanghai that in dealing with Chinese officials he had "been guided by two simple rules of action. I have never preferred a demand which I did not believe to be both moderate and just, and from a demand so preferred I have never receded."

What misgiving troubled the repose of Lord Elgin as to the good faith of the Imperial Government on which he had ventured so much, may be partly inferred from his avidity in catching at any straw which might support his faith. Hearing that "his friends the two Imperial Commissioners" who had signed the treaty were appointed to meet him in Shanghai to arrange the tariff, Lord Elgin welcomed the news as "proof

that the emperor has made up his mind to accept the treaty." But as the emperor had already, by imperial decree dated 3rd July, and communicated in the most formal manner to Lord Elgin, expressly sanctioned the treaty before the plenipotentiary left Tientsin, wherefore the anxiety for further proofs of his good intentions? "This decree was forced out of the emperor," Mr Oliphant tells us, "by Lord Elgin's pertinacity"—and the threat of bringing up to Tientsin a regiment of British soldiers then at the mouth of the river! As a matter of fact, the mission of the two Imperial Commissioners was of quite another character from that assigned to it by Lord Elgin. The two men were sent to complete their task of preventing by every means the advent of the barbarians to Peking, just as Lord Elgin himself was, two years later, sent back to China to finish his work, which was to bring the said barbarians into the imperial city. Between two such missions there could be neither reconciliation nor compromise.

There is authority for stating that the Imperial Commissioners were expressly sent by the emperor to Shanghai (1) to annul the whole treaty of Tientsin, and (2) failing the whole, as much of it as possible, but especially the article providing for a Minister at Peking. The ostensible purpose of the mission, from the foreign point of view, was the settlement of the tariff and trade regulations,—about which, however, the Chinese cared very little,—and delegates were appointed for this purpose. The labour was conscientiously performed, on one side at any rate, and the result was highly creditable to the delegates. It was by insertion in the tariff of imports that opium became recognised, chiefly, it would

appear, at the instance of the United States Minister, Mr W. B. Reed, who was on the spot.

Apart from the tariff two principal questions occupied the minds of the negotiators of the treaty—the actual situation at Canton on the part of the English, and the prospective residence in Peking on the part of the Chinese. Lord Elgin hoped, by an appeal to the treaty of peace, to put an end to the hostile proceedings of officials and people which had harassed the occupying force in Canton with impunity for nine months. But it was the treaty itself against which officials, gentry, and braves were making war, just as they had done in the case of the treaty of 1842. There was no ambiguity about the movement. The Government was carried on not in Canton but in the neighbouring city of Fatshan, where the Governor-General Huang, who had been appointed to succeed Yeh, held his court and issued his decrees. Two months after the occupation of Canton the puppet whom the Allies had installed there admitted that the object of the assemblage of braves was to retake the city. Two months after the signature of the treaty and its acceptance by the emperor the Governor-General Huang was publicly offering a reward of $30,000 for the head of Parkes, and was stimulating the people in every way to expel the foreigners from the city. All this was in perfect accord both with imperial policy and with Chinese ethics. It had the full sanction of the emperor, just as similar operations had formerly had of his father. For the grand purpose of destroying or impairing the treaty there was no distinction in the Chinese mind between legitimate and illegitimate, honourable or treacherous, methods.

Lord Elgin, who had returned from Japan to Shanghai to meet the Imperial Commissioners in September, disappointed at their non-arrival, opened communications with them by a threat of returning to Tientsin and thus saving them the trouble of completing their slow journey to Shanghai. On their eventual arrival there he opened a diplomatic campaign against Canton by a demand (October 7) to know under what authority Huang and the military committees were organising attacks on the Allies. In reply the Imperial Commissioners naïvely proposed to promulgate the treaty. This frivolous answer provoked the rejoinder (October 9) that the treaty had been three months before publicly sanctioned by imperial decree, that something more than "documents and professions" were required to satisfy Lord Elgin on a question of "peace or war," and he demanded the removal of the Governor-General Huang. The commissioners then said they had denounced Huang to the throne, and hoped for his removal at no very distant date. They would also move his Majesty the Emperor to withdraw his authority from the hostile militia. Canton being thus disposed of, as he supposed, Lord Elgin proceeded to other business. But the hostilities at Canton continued without the least abatement for three months longer, until something more strenuous than diplomatising with the Imperial Commissioners was resorted to. The British Government had at last become exasperated, and the Foreign Secretary, Lord Malmesbury, wrote on October 14 to Lord Elgin, "The most severe measures against the braves are the only ones which will obtain the recognition by the Cantonese of the treaty of Tientsin." It was not long before Lord

Elgin himself became converted to the same belief, for on January 20, 1859, he wrote to General van Straubenzee, after some successful reprisals he had made on the village braves, that "advantage should be taken of the cool weather to familiarise the rural inhabitants of the vicinity of Canton with the presence of our troops, and to punish severely braves or others who venture to attack them." By this time also he had realised that the promise on which he relied in October had been evaded, and he told the Imperial Commissioners on January 22 that he would "have nothing more to say to them on Canton matters, —that our soldiers and sailors would take the braves into their own hands."

The effect of the new tactics was immediate and satisfactory. When the Allied troops began to move about they were welcomed in the very hotbeds of hostility. "At Fatshan," writes General van Straubenzee on January 28, "we were received most courteously by the authorities and respectfully by the people." A five-days' excursion to Fa Yuen, the headquarters of the anti-foreign committee, was likewise a perfect success; and so everywhere throughout the Canton district. Lord Elgin was now able to assume a bolder tone with the Imperial Commissioners and address them in still plainer terms.

"The moderation of the Allies," he wrote to them in February, "has been misunderstood by the officials and gentry by whom the braves are organised. . . . This habit of insult and outrage shall be put down with the strong hand. . . . It shall be punished by the annihilation of all who persist in it." There was no need for any such extreme remedy, for as soon as

the burglars realised that the watch-dog had been loosed they ceased from troubling the household, and fell back on peaceful and respectable ways of life. "With the cessation of official instigation," Lord Elgin wrote in March, "hostile feeling on the part of the inhabitants appears to have subsided," thus falling into line with Consul Alcock, who wrote: "Clear proof was furnished that the long-nurtured and often-invoked hostility of the Cantonese was entirely of fictitious growth, due exclusively to the inclinations of the mandarins as a part of the policy of the Court of Peking." And then, too, the difficulty of removing the Governor-General Huang disappeared. He had, in fact, been unsuccessful in expelling the barbarians, just as Yeh had been, and the imperial decree superseding him naturally followed. His presence or absence had then become of no importance to the Allies, as, had he remained, he would have accepted the accomplished fact of the foreign supremacy with as good a grace as the gentry and their braves had done, for they never contemplated endangering their lives by fighting. Outrages on stragglers, assassination, kidnapping, and bravado filled up the repertory of their militant resources, and when these were no longer effective they retired into private life as if nothing had happened. The officials were no less acquiescent once they realised that they had a master.

The interest of this Canton episode lies in its relation to the Chinese question generally. Foreign intercourse with China is marked by a rhythm so regular that any part of it may be taken as an epitome of the whole, like a pattern of wall-paper. From Canton we learn that calculation of national advantage or danger, argument

from policy, even threats which are not believed, are so much "clouds and wind," not profitable even as mental exercises. What alone is valid is concrete fact; not treaties, but the execution of them.

The Imperial Commissioners had in good time presented their own demand on Lord Elgin, and in most becoming terms, for between preferring and meeting a request there is all the difference in the world. The two Chinese signatories of the treaty frankly avowed that they had signed without scrutiny under military pressure, and that certain stipulations were highly inconvenient to the Imperial Government, particularly the right of keeping a Minister in residence in Peking. Lord Elgin agreed to move his Government, and the Government consented to waive the right, conditionally. Lord Elgin laid stress on the retention of the right as a right, forgetting that in China a right conditionally waived is a right definitely abandoned. Nor only so, but so far from consolidating what remains, it constitutes a vantage-ground for demanding further concessions, and in other fields of international relations besides that of China. Nothing therefore could have been wider of the mark than any expectation that "the decision of her Majesty's Government respecting residence in Peking would induce the Chinese Government to receive in a becoming manner a representative of her Majesty when he proceeds to the Peiho to exchange the ratification." Experience pointed to quite the opposite effect.

These critical remarks are by no means intended either to belittle Lord Elgin's good work, to depreciate his real statesmanship, or to scoff at his sensibility and

high-mindedness. But his errors being like a flaw in a steel casting, pregnant with destruction, and as the same kind of flaw continues to vitiate many of our smaller diplomatic castings, the China question could not really be understood without giving proper consideration to them. For the rest, as a despatch writer Lord Elgin was both copious and able—he did not take a double first at Oxford for nothing. Still, his writings and orations are scarcely the source whence one would seek for light and leading on the Chinese problem. They are vitiated by self-vindication. Many of them are elaborate efforts to make the worse appear the better reason, while their political philosophy is based too much on speculative conceptions where ascertained data were available.

On the last day of July 1858 Lord Elgin with his suite set out on their memorable voyage to Japan, the narrative of which has been so skilfully woven by Laurence Oliphant. This episode will claim our attention later. His lordship came, saw, and conquered—returned to China in a month crowned with fresh laurels. At Shanghai he saw the tariff settled, and then performed another pioneer voyage of prodigious significance. This was up the Yangtze as far as the great central emporium Hankow. Captain Sherard Osborn was the Palinurus of that original and venturesome voyage. After that, Lord Elgin bent his steps towards England; but before leaving China the ghosts of things done and undone haunted him. "A variety of circumstances lead me to the conclusion that the Court of Peking is about to play us false," was the melancholy epitaph he wrote on his mixed policy, on his honest attempt to make war with rose-water,

and his subordination, on critical occasions, of judgment to sentiment.

Meantime his brother Frederick, who had carried the Tientsin treaty to London, was returning with it and the Queen's ratification and his letter of credence as British Minister to China. The *dénoûment* of the plot was now at hand. The real mind of the Chinese Government was finally declared in the sanguinary reception the new envoy met with at the entrance of the Peiho in June 1859. Frederick Bruce was generally considered a man of larger calibre than his elder brother. "In disposition he was a fine, upright, honourable fellow," writes Sir Hope Grant, "and in appearance tall and strong made, with a remarkably good expression of countenance." But it took even him a long time to fathom the new situation. After his disastrous repulse from the Taku forts he wrote in August, "I regret much that when the permanent residence was waived it was not laid down in detail what the reception of the Minister at Peking was to be." But it was no question of detail that barred his passage to Peking. It was the settled determination never to see the face of any foreign Minister; and it seems strange that it should have taken not only another year but another war finally to convince the British plenipotentaries and their Government that the message of China from first to last, from Peking and Canton, had been to fling the treaty in their face.

SIR FREDERICK BRUCE.

II. LORD ELGIN'S SECOND MISSION.

Invasion of Peking—Convention of Peking—Establishment of the British Legation—Russian and British, a contrast.

The Chinese perfidy at Taku had of course to be avenged. A formidable expedition was equipped by the Allied Powers, Lord Elgin and Baron Gros being reappointed as plenipotentiaries. The history of the famous Pekin campaign of 1860, with its tragic incidents, has been impressed on the world by so many writers, military and civil, most of them actors in the scenes they depict, that the barest outline of events may suffice in this place.

In the preliminary agreement between the two Governments, the British military force was limited to 10,000 effectives; but the number actually placed in the field exceeded that figure by the consent of the French, whose forces were between 6000 and 7000. The British contingent was commanded by General Sir Hope Grant, the French by General Montauban, afterwards created Count Palikao,—"a fine, handsome, soldier-like man, apparently under sixty years of age."

The naval forces were commanded respectively by Vice-Admiral Sir James Hope, "a tall, noble-looking man, with a prepossessing and most gentlemanlike appearance,"[1] and by Admiral Page, "a superior man with a great deal of dry humour, but bad-tempered."[2]

The friction arising between Allies working together, waiting for each other, consulting at every step, tak-

[1] Sir Hope Grant's Journal. [2] Ibid.

ing precedence of each other on alternate days, at first vexatious, was in the end overcome by the tact of the commanders on both sides.

The first operation of war was to occupy the harbour of Chusan as an intermediate base. After that the British force was conveyed in transports to Talien-wan, where they were disembarked, while the French were landed at Chefoo, on the opposite shore of the Gulf of Pechili. At these points preparations were made for the intended descent on the coast of the province of Chihli, between 200 and 300 miles to the westward. The British force included 1000 cavalry in splendid condition, and a battery of Armstrong guns, then for the first time used in active service. The French had no cavalry, the attempts to import horses from Japan were not successful, and the scarcity of draught-animals on their side caused great delay in the sailing of the expedition from the temporary depots. At length on July 26 a fleet of over 200 sail—a magnificent spectacle —carried the two armies to within twenty miles of the Peiho, where they anchored, waiting for favourable weather and a minute reconnaissance.

The one piece of strategy in the campaign was the choice of a landing-place. The Taku forts, which had been strong enough to repulse Sir James Hope with severe loss a year before, had been further strengthened, for to the Chinese it was a matter of life and death to bar the entrance to the Peiho. The chain barrier across the mouth of the river could not be forced under the concentrated fire of the forts; only the lightest draught vessels could approach within five miles; and a frontal attack was not to be thought of. But a decided difference of opinion between the Allied generals had dis-

closed itself as to the mode of procedure. The French commander was determined to land on the coast to the southward of the forts; the English was still more resolute in selecting as a landing-place the mouth of the Peitang river, eight miles northward of Taku. So irreconcilable were their views that it was agreed that each should go his own way, only starting simultaneously. After more careful study, however, General Montauban came to think better of his own scheme, and proposed to Sir Hope Grant to join him in the landing at Peitang.

So on August 2 the first detachments of 2000 from each army were disembarked, and the campaign proper commenced. The forts at Peitang were easily occupied, "a kind old man" pointing out where there were loaded shells which would explode on foot pressure on a gun-lock laid so as to fire a train. By means of a raised causeway leading through a sea of "briny slush," positions were reached whence the Taku forts could be attacked from the rear. Though bravely defended, the forts on the left bank were captured, and as they commanded those on the opposite bank no resistance was offered by the latter. The Peiho was thus opened for the conveyance of troops and stores to Tientsin, which was made the base of operations for the advance of the Allied armies on Peking.

The military movements were hampered by the presence of the two plenipotentiaries, who stopped on the way to negotiate with the unbeaten foe. Delay was not the only untoward consequence of these proceedings. At one moment a military disaster seemed to have been narrowly escaped. Taking advantage of

the singular credulity of the Allies, the Chinese, while engaging them in friendly negotiations, had planned to decoy the army into a convenient camping-ground at Changchia-wan, towards which the troops were marching, when, "To my surprise," writes the commander-in-chief, "we found a strong Tartar picket, who retired on our approach; and a little farther on were seen great bodies of cavalry and infantry, the latter drawn up behind a large nullah to our right front, displaying a number of banners." In the meantime the envoys, Parkes, Loch, and other officers, who had been negotiating with the higher mandarins at Tung-chow, a couple of miles off, were seized and made prisoners with their escort, all being subsequently cruelly tortured, and most of them massacred, in accordance with Chinese practice in war.

Sir Hope Grant, finding his army of 4000 men in process of being hemmed in, attacked and routed the Chinese troops on September 18, resuming his march on the 21st, when the remainder of his force had joined him. He had not gone far, however, when the way was again barred, and another action had to be fought at the bridge Pali-chiao, ten miles from Peking, where General Montauban distinguished himself, and whence he derived his title.

Far from owning themselves defeated, the Chinese on the morrow resumed negotiations as between equals. The Imperial Commissioners who had mismanaged the affair were replaced by Prince Kung, a brother of the emperor, who sent letters under a flag of truce, saying he was ready to come to terms, but "said nothing about our poor prisoners." The Allied plenipotentiaries declined to treat until the captives should be returned,

whereupon Prince Kung sent another letter saying they were safe, but would only be sent back on the restitution of the Taku forts and the evacuation of the river by the Allied fleets.

Lord Elgin had demanded that he should deliver the Queen's letter in person to the emperor. Prince Kung refused this demand, which Lord Elgin incontinently abandoned. Waxing bolder, Prince Kung next threatened that the entry of the Allied forces into the capital would be followed by the instant massacre of the prisoners. The plenipotentiaries retorted by intimating that the surrender of prisoners was a necessary condition of the suspension of hostilities. A week having been wasted in this vain see-saw, an ultimatum was sent into Peking on September 30. This was answered by the Chinese inviting the Allies to retire to Changchia-wan, the scene of the great defeat of their army, offering to sign the treaty there. And so the contest was maintained until the Allied artillery was planted within sixty yards of the north gate, and the hour was about to strike when the wall was to be battered down.

Most valuable information—the topography of the city—had been supplied by General Ignatieff, who accompanied the Allies. A map which he lent to Sir Hope Grant showed every street and house of importance in Peking, laid down by a scientific member of the Russian mission in the city. The data had been obtained by traversing the streets in a cart, from which angles were taken, while an indicator fixed to the wheel marked the distances covered. Without this plan the attack would have been made from the south side, as proposed by General Montauban, which would have

involved a march through the commercial or Chinese quarter, and the surmounting first of the Chinese and then of the Tartar wall. The map made it clear that from every point of view the north side offered the most eligible point of attack, where nothing intervened between a great open plain and the wall of the Manchu city.

Passing over the dramatic incidents of the destruction of the Summer Palace, an act of calculated vengeance for the murder and maltreatment of envoys and prisoners, the flight of the emperor on a hunting tour to Jêho, whence he never returned, the release of the prisoners and their account of the captivity, the new treaty was signed at the Hall of Ceremonies on October 22, 1860, by Prince Kung, "a delicate gentlemanlike man, evidently overcome with fear," and his coadjutor, Hangki. The treaties of Tientsin were ratified, and some further indemnities exacted. The special provisions introduced into the French treaty will be referred to in a subsequent chapter.[1]

The closing scene was marked by a degree of haste somewhat recalling Tientsin in 1858. The very slow advance on Peking brought the climax of the campaign unpleasantly close to the season when communication by water would be shut off by ice; "the weather became bitterly cold, some of the hills being covered with snow." And Sir Hope Grant's never-failing counsellor, Ignatieff, with "his usual extreme kindness," furnished him with the most important information that the Peiho would soon become frozen up and it would be unsafe to linger in Peking. Mr Loch's galloping off with the treaty, as shown in the illustration,

[1] Vol. ii. p. 224.

MR LOCH DEPARTS FROM PEKING FOR ENGLAND WITH CHINESE TREATY.

was rather typical of the whole business. The treaty as such was of little consequence—the fulfilment of its provisions was everything.

Some lessons, nevertheless, had been learned in the school of diplomatic adversity. Peking was not left without a *locum tenens* of the Minister, Tientsin was not left without a garrison, and the Taku forts were occupied by the Allies for a couple of years after the final conclusion of peace.

"Ring out the old; ring in the new." There seemed a natural fitness in the Hon. Frederick Bruce succeeding the Earl of Elgin as Minister plenipotentiary, and there was a dramatic finish in the farewell ceremonial when the retiring representative of the Queen vacated the seat of honour, placing therein his younger brother, whom he introduced to Prince Kung as the accredited agent of Great Britain. The new era was inaugurated; a real representative of her Britannic Majesty was installed in the capital of the Son of Heaven.

The season was late, and though two palaces had been granted on lease for the residences of the British and the French Ministers, many alterations and repairs were needed to render them fit for occupation, which could not be effected before the closing of the sea communication by ice. The Ministers therefore resolved to withdraw from Peking for the winter, placing their respective legations in charge of a junior consular officer, Mr Thomas Adkins, who volunteered to hold the post until the return of the plenipotentiaries in the following spring.

Mr Adkins was not the only foreign sojourner in the Chinese capital. There was a French Lazarist priest, Mouilli by name, who, having successfully concealed

himself among his native Christians during the military advance of the Allies, emerged from his hiding-place on the triumphant entry of the ambassadors, and showed himself in the streets in a sedan chair with four bearers. There was the permanent Russian establishment within the city, with its unbroken record of 173 years. Originally composed of prisoners taken at the siege of Albazin, it had become a seminary of the Orthodox Church and a political *vedette* of the Russian empire, invaluable to the two masterful diplomatists who appeared suddenly on the scene in the years 1858 and 1860. The mission served as a speculum through which Russia could look into the inner recesses of the Chinese State, while to the Chinese it was a window of bottle-glass through which the external world was refracted for them. The Russian Government selects its agents on the principle on which we select university crews or All-England elevens — namely, the most fit. So important and far-sighted a scheme as the Peking mission was not left to chance or the claims of seniority, but was maintained in the highest efficiency. Its members — six ecclesiastical and four lay — were changed every ten years. All of them, from the Archimandrite downwards, were accomplished linguists, speaking Chinese like the natives, and masters also of the Manchu and Mongol languages. Their relations with the Chinese officials were unostentatious, yet brotherly. Few secrets, either of administration, dynastic politics, or official intrigue, no communications between the Government, provincial or imperial, and any foreigners, escaped record in the archives of the Russian mission. The *personnel* were protected from

MONSEIGNEUR MOUILLI.

outrage or insult by their own tact and their traditional prestige; and as the Daimios of Japan in their anti-foreign manifestoes declared that every foreigner could be insulted with impunity except the Russians, so in China the name was a talisman of security. While the Anglo-French expedition was marching towards Peking the Russian Secretary, M. Popoff, had occasion to leave that city and pass the night at a native inn on the road to Tientsin. The place became filled with the retreating Chinese soldiery, and M. Popoff had the pleasure of hearing their excited conversation respecting himself. They were for dragging him out and killing him on the spot, when the landlord interposed. "That foreigner is a Russian," said he; "it will be dangerous to lay a hand on him."

M. Popoff's errand was to meet General Ignatieff, who was making his way to Peking with the Allied forces. It was of the utmost importance that he should arrive simultaneously with the French and English plenipotentiaries in order to save China from her doom. China's extremity was Russia's opportunity for showing the sincerity of her long unbroken friendship. The foreigners had come to possess themselves of the empire and destroy the dynasty. Their ruthless character was soon to be shown in the burning and pillage of the Summer Palace. The Chinese Court's apprehension of the impending calamity was proved by the flight of the emperor to a quasi-inaccessible retreat. In that terrible crisis no sacrifice would have been deemed by the imperial family too great to "get rid of the barbarians." Confirming their own worst fears as to the designs of the invaders,

General Ignatieff revealed to them the only way of salvation. Nothing would arrest the schemes of the Allies but the intervention of a strong Power friendly to China. He had it in his power to make such representations to Baron Gros and Lord Elgin as would induce them to withdraw their troops. This essential service he offered to the Chinese for a nominal consideration. Only a rectification of frontier by inclusion of a sterile region inhabited by robbers and infested by tigers, where no mandarin could make a living, fit only for a penal settlement, with a rugged sea-coast where no Chinese sail was ever seen. Prince Kung jumped at the providential offer of deliverance, and so that great province called Primorsk, with its 600 miles of coast-line, which gave to Russia the dominion of the East — "Vladivostock" — was signed away by the panic-stricken rulers of China. A year later this transaction cropped up in conversation over the teacups, after the business of the day had been disposed of, between Prince Kung and a certain foreign diplomatist, who remarked that there was never the remotest intention on the part of the Allies of keeping a single soldier in China after the treaty was made. The Prince looked aghast, then said solemnly, "Do you mean to say we have been deceived?" "Utterly," replied the other; and then the dejection of the Prince was such as the foreigner, who lived to enjoy a twenty-years' acquaintance with him, declared he never saw in his or any other Chinese countenance. Thus General Ignatieff, without any force, in the vulgar sense, of his own, was adroit enough and bold enough to wield the forces of his belligerent neighbours so as to carry off the only

solid fruit of the war, while fulfilling the obligations of friendship for China and denouncing her spoilers.

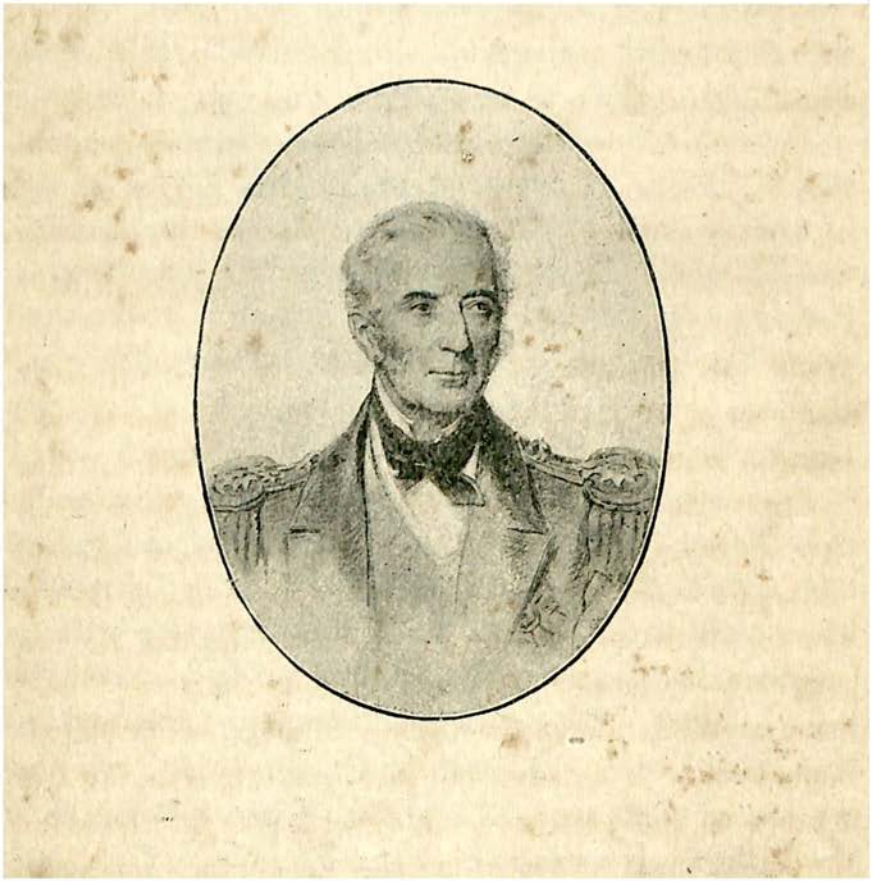
The Russian envoy had not the same incentive to hurry away from Peking as the other treaty-makers had, for the ice which would imprison them would afford him the most expeditious road for travel homewards through Siberia. He was nearly as much relieved as Prince Kung himself at getting rid of these "barbarians," for then he had the field of diplomacy all to himself. He made his treaty, and departed during the winter by the back door, across Mongolia.

Ignatieff was a man well known in English society, and thoroughly conversant with England. Like most educated Russians, he was affable and sympathetic—a "charming fellow." He was courteous and companionable to the *locum tenens* of the English Legation, and in taking leave of Mr Adkins expressed the opinion that he would be all right in his isolation so long as the emperor did not return to Peking, but in that event his position would not be an enviable one. However, "if you fear any trouble, go over to the Russian mission: they will take care of you."

The winter of 1860 left the statesmen of China some food for reflection. The thundering legions had passed like a tornado which leaves a great calm behind it. The "still small voice" had also departed, with a province in his *chemadán*, gained without a shot or even a shout. Two strongly contrasted foreign types had thus been simultaneously presented to the astonished Chinese. Can it be doubted which left the deeper impression?

Preparations were made during the winter for receiving the foreign Ministers in the spring. A

department of Foreign Affairs was created under the title of "Tsung-li Koh Kwoh She Yu Yamên," or briefly, "Tsungli-Yamên," the three original members being Prince Kung, Kweiliang, and Wênsiang. The Yamên was established by imperial decrees in January; Mr Bruce and M. Bourboulon arrived in March 1861, when diplomacy proper began, the thread of which will be resumed in a later section.



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CHAPTER XVIII.

INTERCOURSE UNDER THE TREATIES OF 1858 AND 1860.

I. THE DIPLOMATIC OVERTURE.

Spontaneous fulfilment of treaties not to be expected—Retreating attitude of foreign Ministers — Repression of British tourists — Hostility of Pekingese—Conciliation fails—Chinese refuse to conclude treaty with Prussia—Glimpse of the real truth—Rooted determination to keep out foreigners—Absence of the sovereign—Female regents—Diplomatic forms in abeyance—Foreign Ministers' task complicated by assumed guardianship of China—Pleasant intercourse with Manchu statesmen.

When Mr Bruce and M. Bourboulon took up their residence in Peking on March 22, 1861, diplomacy was as yet a white sheet on which it was their part to trace the first characters. The treaty—for all the treaties were substantially one—was their charter; its integral fulfilment their only safety. For as it had not been a bargain of give-and-take between equals, but an imposition pure and simple by the strong upon the weak, there would be no spontaneous fulfilment of its obligations, rather a steady counter-pressure, as of water forcibly confined seeking out weak spots in the dam. Moreover, the two parties to the treaty, foreigners and Chinese, were not acquainted with each other: aims, incentives, temper and character, and the nature of the

considerations by which they respectively would be influenced, were all obscure. It was an uncertain situation, calling for vigilance and caution. There can be no doubt the pregnant importance of the first steps was realised by the representatives on both sides. The thoughts of the Chinese on that critical occasion can only be inferred from their acts. Of what was uppermost in the minds of the foreigners, or at least of the English Minister, we have some slight indications from the pen of a member of his staff, who, though not himself in the diplomatic circle, claims to be the authorised chronicler of the early days of the mission. This pretension is implicitly indorsed by the fact that the preface to Dr Rennie's book [1] was written in Government House, Calcutta, whither he followed Lord Elgin in the capacity of physician. When the Ministers had only been five days in Peking Dr Rennie wrote as follows: "Now is commencing perhaps the most difficult part of a permanent English residency at Peking—namely, the satisfying the Chinese that we are a tolerably harmless and well-intentioned people, inclined to live with them on terms of amity rather than the contrary, and that the desire of our Government is that its subjects should respect, as much as is consistent with reason, their national prejudices."

Such an immaculate sentiment placed in the very forefront of an ambassadorial programme, ushered in at the cost of two wars which shook the foundations of the Chinese empire, leaves something to be desired as a justification for being in Peking at all. But Dr Rennie indicates no other purpose for which foreign legations were established there. He does not get

[1] Peking and the Pekingese.

beyond the mere "residency." A viceroy of India proclaiming at each stage of a "progress" that he was a man of peace, a bride hoping to lead a passably virtuous life, would scarcely be more naïve than a foreign Minister's pious aspiration to behave tolerably well to the Chinese. For where was the "difficulty," one is tempted to ask? It is explained by Dr Rennie.

Two English officers, it appears, had made an excursion to the Great Wall without the necessary consular and local authorisation, and had further shown "the bad taste, at a date so recent to its destruction," to visit the Summer Palace. A formal complaint of these indiscretions met Mr Bruce on his arrival, and credit must be given to the Chinese for their appreciation of the tactical value of what Scotswomen call "the first word of flytin'." They moved the first pawn, and put the British Minister at once on the defensive. He responded by an arbitrary exercise of authority whereby Englishmen were prohibited from visiting Peking. The restriction possessed little direct importance, since few persons were then affected by it; but as the opening act of the new diplomacy, its significance could hardly be overrated. Though "only a little one," it was a recession from the right conferred on the subjects of all treaty Powers to travel for business or pleasure not only to Peking, but throughout the Chinese empire. It was as the tuning-fork to the orchestra.

It is not permissible to suppose that the British Minister had not good reasons for swerving from the principle of exercising rights, great and small, for which, as he well knew, experience in China had been one long, unbroken, cogent argument. Dr Rennie furnishes his readers with the reason. "The Chinese," he

observes, "would seem to be very sensitive"; and "taking all the circumstances into consideration, . . . the fear that casual visits on the part of strangers . . . may prove antagonistic to the establishment of a harmonious feeling at the opening of a new era in our intercourse with the Chinese," the Minister resolved to keep Englishmen (and only them) out of the capital.

This explanation, like that of the purpose of the Legation itself, leaves on us a sense of inadequacy. These hyper-sensitive people had been engaged, only six months before, in torturing and massacring foreign envoys and prisoners, for which atrocities the destruction and sack of Yuen-ming-yuen was thought to be not too severe a reprisal. That the high officials who had committed these cruelties and endured the penalty should suddenly become so delicate that they could not bear the thought of a harmless tourist looking upon the ruins of the palace seems a somewhat fantastical idea. As for the sensitiveness of the townspeople, Dr Rennie himself had some experience of it three days after penning the above remarks. "A good deal of shouting and hooting," he says, was followed by "stones whizzing past me." Then "my horse was struck by a stone" and bolted. A similar experience befell another member of the Legation on the same day in another part of the city. Dr Rennie believed the stones to have been thrown by boys, which is probable enough. The favourite Chinese official palliation of outrages on foreigners is to attribute them to youths and poor ignorant people, which, however, in nowise softens the impact of the missile. Let us give the Chinese full credit for the virtues they possess—and they are many —but no one familiar with the streets of Peking

would consider delicacy their predominant characteristic. View the diplomatic incident how we please, it cannot be denied that the Chinese drew first blood in the new contest, and at the same time practically tested the disposition of the invading force.

Another "straw" from Dr Rennie's journal may be noticed as indicating the set of the current. *Apropos* of the first commercial case that had been sent up from the ports to the Minister, he records the conclusion that "in almost every dispute which arises between ourselves and the Chinese we are in the first instance in the wrong; but, unfortunately [for whom?], the Chinese equally invariably adopt the wrong method of putting matters right," so that "the original wrong committed by us is entirely lost sight of." The observation refers exclusively to mercantile affairs, and it was a rather large generalisation to make after a month's experimental diplomacy in Peking.

The Minister soon found that his efforts to placate the Chinese Government were not producing the intended effect. It was not the "casual visitor" that in any special way annoyed them, but the foreigner in all his moods and tenses, most of all Mr Bruce himself, his colleagues and their staff, medical and other, and all that they stood for. General Ignatieff had not, after all, conjured away the foreign plague, nor were the Chinese statesmen entirely reassured even as to their immunity from the military danger. In the month of April Admiral Hope, Brigadier-General Staveley, and Mr Parkes visited Peking, and were courteously received; but Prince Kung was visibly relieved, Dr Rennie tells us, when assured that the admiral was not to remain there. As for the general, his presence in

the vicinity was inevitable so long as a considerable British and French force remained in garrison in Tientsin and Taku. Like the Ministers themselves, he was an unpleasant necessity to be endured as well as may be. But being thus obliged to tolerate the greater evil, it would appear to Western reasoning that an admiral more or less in an inland town need not have so greatly upset Chinese equanimity. Prince Kung, however, was not yet able to look on such matters with Western eyes. Every foreigner kept at arm's-length, no matter what his rank or condition, was a gain, as every locust destroyed is a gain to the peasant.

So when the Prussian envoy, Count Eulenberg, presented himself, the British Minister vouching for his respectability, for the purpose of making a treaty on the lines of those already made and ratified, his efforts were frustrated by every plausible device. The envoy was relegated to the most distant point at which it was deemed feasible to stay his progress—namely, Tientsin, where negotiations were vexatiously protracted during four months. The first and final sticking-point was the claim to residence in the capital, which the Chinese absolutely refused to concede. Eventually they agreed to compound for a deferred entry ten years after signature. This by haggling was finally reduced to five years, and the treaty was thereupon concluded in August 1861. The old Canton tactics were thus revived, as if nothing had happened since 1857.

As the echo of Mr Bruce, Dr Rennie's comment on the proceeding is worth noting. "Looks very like merely gaining time, in hopes that, before that period expires, *all foreign residence in the capital* will be at an end." Here we catch a glimpse of the fundamental

truth underlying all Chinese diplomacy from first to last—the purpose, never relaxed for an instant, of some day expelling foreigners from the country. No foreigner could hope to unravel the tangle of Chinese reasoning so as to comprehend in what manner the exclusion of one State was to assist in the eviction of the representatives of four Great Powers already established in the capital; but it may be inferred from the above remark that Mr Bruce was beginning to perceive that good behaviour towards the Chinese was not the be-all and end-all of the functions of a British representative in China. There was another side. We know, in fact, though Dr Rennie does not record it, that Mr Bruce began to see the necessity of making a stand against the reactionary pressure of the Chinese; that he was resolved on bending the Ministers of the Yamên to his will — being satisfied he could do it— instead of yielding to theirs in the vain hope of gaining their confidence.

The grand desideratum had been at last obtained, access to the capital; but how different the realisation from the anticipation! There was no sovereign and no Court, only the shell of the nut without the kernel. And as diplomacy began so it continued, in successive illusions, partially dispelled, yet clung to with slow-dying hope.

At first sight, no doubt, the task of the foreign representatives seemed an easy one: they had but to lay down the law to a defeated Power, to hammer the softened metal. This course would have been as simple in fact as it was in principle had they been united, and had it been possible for them to take a simple view of their mission; but from the first their duty to their respec-

tive countries was complicated, and in varying degrees, by what they conceived to be their duty towards China. It was inevitable that the attempt to follow two lines of policy divided by such cleavage should result in a fall into the crevasse. China, in fact, was too large a subject for either the treaty Powers or their agents to grasp. She made huge demands on the humanity, the indulgence, and the protection of the Powers who had broken down her wall of seclusion, and she had nothing in kind to offer them in return—neither gratitude nor co-operation, nor even good faith. For this China could be blamed only in so far as her own welfare was hindered by her irresponsiveness, for her statesmen were not far wrong in attributing to any motive rather than pure philanthropy the obtrusive solicitude of the Western Powers. International relations even between kindred peoples are in the nature of things selfish, or worse; and the more they assume an altruistic mask the more they lie open to suspicion. In this cynical view of the attitude of her neighbours China has never wavered.

Yet it was not all illusion and Dead Sea apples. Something had been gained by diplomatic access to the capital. The elaborate insolence of the Chinese mandarin had been exchanged for the urbanity of the well-bred Manchu. It became possible to converse. Foreigners were listened to with attention, and answered with an open countenace. The change was incalculable. It recalled the days of Lord Macartney and the Emperor Kienlung, of Sir John Davis's pleasant intercourse with Kiying, and of the agreeable impression left by the Manchu statesmen who were concerned from 1841 onwards in the conduct of war or the conclusion of

peace. If to the kindly personal relations which characterised the earlier years of Peking diplomacy no permanent tangible result could be definitely ascribed, who can tell what evils were staved off or calamity averted by these friendly amenities?

In order, however, to appreciate the state of affairs in Peking in 1865, it is necessary to fill the gap in our narrative by an outline of events following the ratification of the treaty of Tientsin and Convention of Peking in October 1860.

II. NEW PORTS AND OPENING OF THE YANGTZE.

Seven new coast ports—Admiral Hope's Yangtze expedition—His relations with Taiping rebels—Hankow, Kiukiang, and Chinkiang opened to trade — Panic in Hankow, and exodus of population for fear of rebels.

The new ports opened to trade — Tientsin, Newchwang, and Chefoo in the North; Swatow, and two Formosan ports; Kiungchow in Hainan—added considerably to the range of foreign commerce, and necessitated a large extension of the foreign customs and of the consular services. But the most important feature in the new arrangements was the effective opening of the river Yangtze. It was interesting, as giving access to the commercial centre of the empire; and as bringing foreigners into direct contact, possibly conflict, with the Taiping rebels. For the banks of the great river were at the time checkered with the alternate strongholds of rebels and imperialists. Trade must therefore either be carried on on sufferance from both, or be efficiently protected from the

interference of either belligerent. Obviously this was a matter to be gone about discreetly.

The course and capabilities of the great waterway, and the disposition of the military forces on its banks, had been well reconnoitred by Lord Elgin himself in 1858; and the ports to be opened, which were left unnamed in the treaty, were pretty definitely indicated in the survey then made. There were to be three in all. Chinkiang, which had been recently recovered from the rebels, situated at the intersection of the Imperial Canal and the Yangtze-kiang, was definitely fixed. The two others farther up river remained to be selected.

The opening of the river was by treaty made contingent on the restoration of imperial authority on its banks; but as there was nothing more likely to accelerate that consummation than commercial traffic on the river, the Chinese Government acquiesced in the British authorities making the experiment, at their own risk as regarded possible trouble with the insurgents. The object was to "throw open the general coasting trade of the river"; and Lord Elgin, on his departure from China, left the undertaking in the hands of Admiral Hope, to whom he attached Mr Parkes, withdrawn for the occasion from his duties as commissioner in Canton.

The admiral started from Shanghai in advance of Mr Parkes, with a squadron of light-draught steamers, on February 11, 1861. He carried an exploring expedition composed of Colonel Sarel, Captain Blakiston, Mr Shereshewsky, and Dr A. Barton, whose proceedings are reported in Blakiston's 'Five Months on the Upper Yangtze'; several American missionaries; two French-

FIRST BRITISH CONSULATE AT KOLENGSOO, AMOY, 1844.

men, afterwards distinguished, MM. Eugène Simon and A. Dupuis, the latter proving the means of eventually giving Tongking to France; a French military attaché; Lieut.-Colonel Wolseley, D.A.Q.-M.G.; and a delegation from the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, with several private persons. Whether the pilots presumed upon light draught and steam power, or whether the course of the river had changed so much since the previous surveys were made, the vessels got stranded, one after another, in the estuary; and as each grounded a companion was told off to stand by her, so that before they had got clear of what is known as the Langshan Crossing (the home of the famous breed of black poultry) the admiral's tender, the Coromandel, was the only vessel left in a mobile condition. Not to lose time, the admiral determined to push on in that non-combatant craft to Nanking, the rebel capital, and test the temper and intentions of the Taipings.

As the steamer slowly approached the landing-place, in bright sunshine and a still atmosphere, the batteries on the river front were crowded, but remained silent.

"What will you do, sir, if they fire?" the admiral was asked.

"Oh, I will just drop down out of range, and send and ask them what they mean by it," he replied, with deep deliberate utterance, not unlike Beaconsfield's.

An officer was sent ashore to parley, some rebel officers came on board, and the prospect of an amicable understanding appeared to be satisfactory. It was a critical juncture in the history both of the Taiping movement itself and of foreign relations with it and with China. Without exaggeration, it may be said

that the proximate fate of the Taipings then lay hidden within the brain of Sir James Hope, and each occasion of contact between him and them during the next few months added its definite contribution to the data on which the momentous decision was ultimately taken. Although he had then no higher opinion of the Taipings than that they were "an organised band of robbers," the admiral was resolved to give them fair play; and since no diplomatic intercourse could be held with insurgents, he determined to take relations with them under his own supervision (March 8, 1861). "The principle I shall adopt being that in the district of country of which they hold possession the Taiping authorities must be regarded as those of the *de facto* Government, and this principle being likely to lead to the payment of double duties (to rebels and imperialists) on all trade conducted at places in their possession, I am desirous of definite instructions on the subject."

The first point to be settled with the rebel authorities at Nanking was the non-molestation of British traffic passing up and down the river within range of their batteries or otherwise, to secure which object it had been determined to station a ship of war abreast of the city. The sanction of the Taiping chiefs was wanted to this arrangement, which, however, without such sanction, it would have been all the more necessary to insist upon. The second point affected the general relations between foreign trade and the rebel movement. The next aim of the admiral was to arrive at an understanding with the leaders for the neutralisation of Shanghai and Wusung within an area of thirty miles round these two places.

Not being prepared to enter into definite negotiations until the arrival of Mr Parkes, who had not yet joined the expedition, Sir James Hope returned to the squadron which he had left aground in the lower reaches of the river. But thinking the time and the opportunity might be usefully employed in gathering some acquaintance with the Taipings at their head-quarters, he landed three volunteers at Nanking, whose presence he ascertained would not be unwelcome to the authorities there. They were to remain in the city as the guests of the rebels till the admiral's return. The party consisted of Lieut.-Colonel Wolseley, Mr P. J. Hughes, vice-consul designate of Kiukiang, and one of the Shanghai delegates. They were joined on shore by the Rev. William Muirhead, missionary, who had reached Nanking by land from Shanghai. The party was thus a thoroughly representative one. On the return of the admiral a week later, accompanied by Mr Parkes, the arrangements for a guard-ship were satisfactorily settled after some puerile obstruction, and the expedition proceeded on its way up the river to Hankow, where, as also at Kiukiang and Chinkiang, consular officers were established; and the Yangtze was declared open by notification in Shanghai on March 18, 1861.

The expedition was fruitful in information concerning the rebels, all tending to confirm the purely destructive character of the movement. Certain incidents of the voyage were also most instructive to the visitors. While the expedition was still at Hankow the Taipings had captured a walled city, fifty miles distant, which had been passed by the squadron on its way up a few days before. The news created a universal panic

throughout the three cities, Wuchang, Hanyang, and Hankow, and the scene which followed could not be paralleled. It is thus laconically referred to in the report of the delegates of the Chamber of Commerce: "The abandonment was most complete, not a house nor a shop was open, and it became equally impossible to purchase goods, to check quotations, or pursue inquiries."

One day the deep Han river was so packed with junks that one might almost walk from bank to bank over their mat coverings. The next day everything that could float was crowded with fugitive families with their household stuff huddled precariously on the decks, and such a fleet as, for number and picturesqueness, was probably never seen, covered the broad bosom of the Yangtze, making slow headway under sail against the current.

Mr Parkes, eminently a man of fact, thus describes what he was witness to:—

> Darkness fell upon crowds of the people lying with their weeping families, and the *débris* of their property, under the walls of Wuchang, anxious only to escape from defences that should have proved their protection. . . . The noise and cries attending their embarkation continued throughout the night, but daylight brought with it a stillness that was not less impressive than the previous commotion. By that time all the fugitives had left the shore, and the river, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with junks and boats of every description bearing slowly away up-stream the bulk of the population of three cities, which a few days before we had computed at 1,000,000 of souls.

Of what came of this and many such another melancholy exodus of humanity, without resources, ready to brave any death rather than fall into the hands

of the destroyers, there is no record; and the scene at Hankow, magnified a hundred times, would give an inadequate conception of the havoc of the fifteen years of the Taiping rebellion.

III. ADMIRAL HOPE'S POLICY TOWARDS INSURGENTS.

Devastation only to be expected of them—Enforces neutrality and respect for foreign property—Thirty-mile radius round Shanghai—Hesitancy of British Minister and Foreign Office—Overcome by firmness of Admiral—Capture of Ningpo by rebels—Arrangements for trade there—Bad faith of rebels—Shanghai to be defended—Its dangerous position—Ravages of rebels—Offensive movements against them—Clearing of the thirty-mile radius—Cordial relations between English and French admirals—Mr Bruce won over—The campaign—Recapture of Ningpo—Chinese raise foreign force—Ward—Burgevine—Chinese statesmen who organised the suppression of the rebellion—General Gordon takes command of the "Ever-Victorious Army."

None of the spectators was more profoundly impressed than Admiral Hope, and the spectacle undoubtedly helped to mature his views on the demerits of the rebellion. On April 6 he wrote to the Admiralty: "A period of anarchy, indefinite in duration, appears likely to ensue, in which the commercial towns of the empire will be destroyed, and its most productive provinces laid waste. For this state of things, so destructive to foreign trade, I see no remedy except the recognition by both parties, if practicable, of the neutrality of the consular ports, which would then become places of security in which the Chinese merchants and capitalists could take refuge." And towards the realisation of this scheme the first step was the obligation laid upon the rebel Government at Nanking that their forces should not

approach within thirty miles of Shanghai or Wusung. This idea, however, was but slowly assimilated by her Majesty's Minister at Peking and by the Government at home, and Lord Russell, while approving generally of the admiral's policy, stipulated that no force be used except in direct defence of British property. Mr Bruce wrote able despatches from Peking, in which the pros and cons, the contingencies and risks, of alternative courses were so well balanced, that the only practical conclusion that could possibly issue therefrom was that eventually arrived at,—to leave the decision to the admiral with a promise of support, whatever course he might adopt. The Foreign Office and the Peking Legation, in fact, faithfully represented the orthodox view of affairs, whereby national policy is primarily reduced to a game of safety for officials, and to the application of theories and general principles often having little bearing on the actualities of the case. The admiral's mind was cast in a different mould. To him the exigencies of the situation were everything, the official balance very little, the fear of responsibility nothing. The man on the spot, seeing clearly the right thing to do and resolved to do it, was bound in the end to gain the Government to his side, for Governments like a strong arm to lean on. With men like Sir James Hope there was no risk of complications arising, for complications arise mostly from the nervous dread of them, never from going straight and clear to the objective point. It needed a visit of the admiral to Peking, however, and the best part of a year's correspondence, to convert the British Government point by point to his views.

Meantime the Taiping rebels advanced to Ningpo,

the defence of which Mr Bruce had refused to sanction, and they captured the city on December 9, 1861, after engaging not to do so. The leaders there were interviewed by the French Admiral Protêt and the English Captain Corbett with a view to gaining a comprehension of their plans, and "to prevent the atrocities of which they have hitherto been guilty, and to endeavour to effect an arrangement by which trade can be conducted from the town. The French Rear-Admiral Protêt will act in concert with me," wrote Admiral Hope to Corbett, December 7.

After the capture of the city the admiral instructed Captain Corbett that if the rebels wished to levy any duties, he was to see that in amount they did not exceed those stipulated in the imperial tariff. Arrangements were also made by the three treaty Powers for the protection of foreign life and the safety of the foreign quarter. The position was, however, a very difficult one, as the rebels had no idea of order or of keeping faith. Indeed the problem of protecting British subjects while observing Lord Russell's neutrality instructions was fast becoming impossible, for the conventions made with the Taiping authorities in Nanking were disregarded by them, and Shanghai itself was threatened.

The admiral's conception of what was required for the protection of British interests was all the while undergoing steady development, and in January he wrote that Kiukiang and Hankow had become as essential to our trade as Shanghai. Writing a month later, he pressed his plans still more definitely upon the Admiralty. "On every occasion," he said on February 21, 1862, "on which I have reported the

state of Shanghai since my return here, it has been my duty to bring the devastation and atrocities committed by the rebels in its immediate vicinity very prominently under their Lordships' notice. These proceedings have been conducted at a distance much too close to be consistent with the respect due to the occupation of the town by French and English forces, or to leave its supplies of provisions and native trade unaffected."

The tension was at length relieved by the relaxation of Earl Russell's restrictions. He had already said that "it might be expedient" to protect the treaty ports, and that he was "of opinion that we ought to defend Shanghai and Tientsin as long as our forces [the garrison left from the Peking campaign] occupied these ports." But now, on March 11, 1862, he took a more practical view of the whole situation, and issued her Majesty's commands that "Admiral Hope should not only defend Shanghai and protect the other treaty ports, but also the British flag and the Yangtze, and generally that British commerce is to have the aid of her Majesty's ships of war."

During the winter of 1861-62 matters had become very critical in Shanghai. The rebel chiefs sent an intimation to the foreign consuls that it was their intention to capture the town, and they proceeded to burn the villages and ravage the country on both sides of the river within gun-shot of the military lines. Special local measures of defence were adopted by the residents, and fugitives in thousands flocked into the only asylum where their lives were safe. The pressure of these events led to yet more definite action on the part of Sir James Hope, who perceived that the effec-

tive defence of Shanghai and its sources of supply involved aggressive movements against the rebels in order to drive them out of all the places they occupied within the thirty-mile radius. In all these proceedings the admiral went hand in hand with his French colleague, and with the commanders of the French and British military forces. An agreement signed by the four on February 13, 1862, settled the immediate question of the defence of the city of Shanghai. An appeal to the British Minister completed his conversion to a "forward policy." "I strongly recommend," wrote the admiral on February 22, "that the French and English commanders should be required by yourself and M. Bourboulon to free the country from rebels within a line"—specified; and the reply was as hearty and free from ambiguity as could be wished: "We can no more suffer Shanghai to be taken by famine or destroyed by insurrection than we can allow it to be taken by assault; and it requires but little experience in China to be assured that the effect of remaining on a strict defensive within the walls is to convince our assailants that we are unable to meet them in the field."

The plan of campaign was settled in an agreement signed by Sir James Hope, Admiral Protêt, and Brigadier Staveley, April 22, 1862, and was carried out to the letter during the early summer and the autumn following. At an early period of the operations Admiral Protêt was killed: his loss was deeply lamented, most of all by his British colleague, with whom relations of exceptional intimacy had sprung up. "The extent to which I enjoyed his confidence and regard will ever prove a source of unmingled satis-

faction to me," wrote Sir James Hope on the day of the admiral's death, May 17, 1862, himself at the time confined to his cabin by wounds.

The rebel forces in Ningpo, who had been on their good behaviour for a short time, became aggressive and insulting, even going the length of offering rewards for foreign heads in the good old mandarin fashion. It is well to remember that even in their unkempt condition, and with everything to gain from the goodwill of foreigners, the Taiping rebels lacked nothing of the most arrogant of Chinese assumptions. The pretensions of the chief far exceeded those of the Emperors of China. The Taipings required foreigners to be subject to their jurisdiction, and they habitually applied derogatory terms to foreign countries. Such things were regarded much as the eccentricities of a lunatic might be. Nevertheless they were a faithful reflex of what is rooted in the Chinese mind.

The position of foreigners and the foreign ships there having thus been rendered intolerable, the city was recaptured from the rebels by Commander Roderick Dew in the same month — a brilliant feat of arms. After the capture he wrote: "In the city itself, once the home of half a million of people, no trace or vestige of an inhabitant could be seen. . . . The canals were filled with dead bodies and stagnant filth." The recapture of Ningpo was the beginning of an Anglo-Franco-Chinese campaign against the rebels in Chê-kiang which was carried on simultaneously with that round Shanghai.

It is needless to follow in detail the operations which culminated two years later in the final suppression of the Taiping rebellion; but the relations which

grew up between the British and French commanders on the one side, and the Chinese military forces which were being organised on the other, were so fruitful in results as to merit their being held in particular remembrance. Though the history has been many times written, it may still not be considered supererogatory to trace some of the points of contact between the native and foreign motives and plans of action, and the evolution of the defensive idea which was the product of the combination.

The Taiping rebellion had devastated the central and southern provinces many years before the Chinese Government roused itself to a serious effort to resist it. The movement of repression originated with the Governor-General of the Hu provinces, whose chief lieutenant and successor was Tsêng Kwo-fan, Governor-General of Kiangnan at the time of which we now speak. His brother, Tsêng Kwo-chuan, the Governor of Chêkiang province, was the military leader, and Li Hung-chang, the most capable and energetic of them all, was governor of the province of Kiangsu. The imperialist forces had been gradually closing on Nanking, and it was thought probable that this hemming-in process forced the rebels to seek outlets and new feeding-grounds in the populous districts of Kiangsu and Chêkiang. The rebels had enlisted a number of foreigners in their ranks, and made great efforts to supply themselves with foreign arms and ammunition, for which purpose, among others, communication with the sea was most important for them. Li, *futai* (governor), also began to enlist foreigners and raise a special corps, drilled and armed in foreign fashion, and led by foreign officers. The foreign agent

in this enterprise on the imperialist side was Frederick Ward, to whom Mr Bruce referred in May 1861 as "a man called Ward, an ex-Californian fillibuster." Within a year Mr Bruce wrote, "In the Chinese force organised and led by Mr Ward I see the nucleus of a military organisation which may prove most valuable in the disturbed state of China." The truth is, "Ward's force," which became known by its high-flown Chinese title of the "Ever-Victorious Army," was seized on from its origin by Sir James Hope, whose encouragement and support were essentially serviceable to it in its early days. The admiral treated Ward as a comrade, fighting by his side, and thus giving the new levy a military status. While the Chinese troops were yet raw he co-operated with them by capturing positions from the rebels and trusting Ward's men to hold them, on the assurance of their leader that they were equal to that duty. Ward himself was an unpretentious, cool, and daring man, reckless of his own life. During his brief campaign he was riddled with bullets, one of which entering his mouth destroyed the palate and impaired his speech, and before long the fatal missile reached its mark. He was succeeded in the command by his second, Burgevine, who, though a good soldier, lacked Ward's tact and moderation, and got into trouble with his paymasters, to whom he used violence and threats. He was deposed from the command by Governor Li, which brought about a serious crisis, for the disciplined force of foreigners and Chinese was left without a head. In this emergency Li applied to the British authorities for the loan of an officer to command the disciplined force. The responsibility of the British representatives, naval and military, became

thus extended to finding a suitable Englishman to replace Burgevine. Their first selection was Captain Holland, R.M., who held the post for a short time, and was succeeded by Captain C. G. Gordon, R.E.

Gordon had arrived in China in 1860 in time to share in the last act of the Peking campaign; he passed the year 1861 at Tientsin, where he was highly esteemed as a model man and meritorious officer. In the winter of 1861 he had conferences with Mr Bruce and Prince Kung on the question of suppressing the rebellion; but none of their ideas, nor the policy of the British Government, were then sufficiently advanced to lead to any practical result. Gordon accompanied his corps to Shanghai in the spring of 1862, and was engaged in the operations for clearing the thirty-mile radius under General Staveley, who spoke warmly of his daring reconnoitring services, for which Gordon had been already distinguished in the Crimea. In the following winter he was busy surveying and mapping the country which had been reconquered from the rebels, and in the spring of 1863 he was offered by his chief the leadership of Ward's force. Gordon's was no doubt the best selection that could have been made, having regard only to the abilities which were then recognised in him; for though General Staveley knew him well both in Tientsin and Shanghai, it is not claimed for him, or any one else, that he had prescience of those transcendent qualities and that magnetic power which the subsequent campaign against the rebels was the means of bringing to light. When Gordon took command of the "Ever-Victorious," the force had had two years' training and regular campaigning, and the men were entitled to rank as veteran troops. Gordon, however, was to infuse new

life into the corps by his dynamic personality and by the diligent use of the regenerative agency of "Sergeant What's-his-name." The number of foreigners actually employed in the force is doubtful, but detailed returns of killed and wounded in the course of a year's operations gave a hundred names. Gordon's faculty of control was probably more severely tested by his management of that motley foreign crew than of the whole indigenous force; but the best of which it was capable was got out of this fortuitous concourse of men, and under the inspiration of the commander several names of distinction emerged from the cosmopolitan group.

When Gordon took over the command in March 1863 it was six months since the thirty-mile radius had been entirely cleared of rebels, and the first duty of the "Ever-Victorious" was to keep that area clear; its second to carry the war as far as it was able into the regions beyond. Its efficiency, especially for this latter purpose, depended on the support and co-operation of the British and French commanders, whose troops remained in occupation of the treaty port of Shanghai. For a time there was danger of a lapse in this co-operation. The dismissed General Burgevine carried his grievances to Peking, and made such an impression by his plausible address on the American and British Ministers there, that Mr Bruce espoused his cause and wrote strong despatches to the British commander, Staveley (April 10, 1863), urging the reinstatement of Burgevine and the suppression of Gordon, to whom it was to be explained that the step was no reflection on him, &c. Again and again the Minister returned to the charge, both to the commander in Shanghai and to the Foreign Office at home; but the

Governor Li was firm, and adduced such cogent reasons for the dismissal of Burgevine that Major-General Brown, who had just succeeded to the British command, joined Li in resolutely protesting against the removal of Gordon, whom, it may be remarked, the English general had never yet seen. The men on the spot prevailed against the man who was theorising from a distance, and on the worst data conceivable, the culprit's own account of himself. Mr Bruce, who, as we have seen, was well acquainted with Gordon, must have had reasons for his policy not given in his official despatches, for these were inadequate and narrow for a man of his large capacity.

We have said Major-General Brown had not then seen Gordon. He had arrived from India in April to relieve General Staveley of the command of the British troops in China. He was a wiry man and of an active temperament, and rapidly mastered the situation. Probably to him is due the credit of the first true perception of what manner of man this young engineer officer was. General Brown was for a few days after his arrival a guest in one of the spacious *hongs* in the Shanghai settlement, which had a wide verandah, giving access to all the bedrooms. One morning very early the general, excited by a message that had just reached him, rushed round in *déshabillé* calling for his host with a piece of coarse Chinese paper in his hand. "Do you know Major Gordon?" he said. "Why, yes, a very nice fellow, and reported to be a first-rate officer." "But," exclaimed the general, "he is a genius! Just look what I have received from him from the front," and he unfolded the whitey-brown paper with some rough diagrams, and a few not very legible pencil

notes indicating his position and plan of attack on Taitsan (where Captain Holland had been repulsed) and Kuensan,[1] both cities on the line of communication with the provincial capital, Soochow. "The man is a genius," reiterated the general, "and must be supported." A few days later another of these cryptic missives arrived, when a similar scene was repeated with redoubled emphasis. "I tell you that man is a military genius; that's what I call him, a military genius," said the dapper little soldier in his vivacious reiterative manner. "I'll support him for all I am worth." And then he developed his own plan of relieving the "Ever-Victorious" of garrison duty, leaving the whole force—secure of its base—free to engage in aggressive operations. This plan of giving effective support to Gordon's force was carried out to the letter, as subsequently described by the general in his official despatches reporting the capture of Taitsan and Kuensan: "I had a field force acting in conjunction, as a support, moving on the extreme edge of our boundary, . . . which was of great assistance to Major Gordon in his operations." He adds: "Kuensan having fallen, Major Gordon now proposes to make it his headquarters; . . . and as the *futai* intends to make Taitsan his headquarters, I shall bring it within the boundary, thus giving the imperialists every confidence to hold it, knowing they could receive support from me at any moment." How vital to the fortunes of the "Ever-Victorious Army" was this decided action of General Brown's was seen when, three months later, General Burgevine had gone over, with a certain following of malcontents, to the Taipings, a movement

[1] Kunshan or Quinsan.

which suggested to Gordon serious misgivings as to the loyalty of the foreigners remaining in his own force. Burgevine, however, had no success in the rebel camp, and soon, in a secret interview with Gordon, sued for safe-conduct and amnesty. Improving his acquaintance, however, with the new commander of the "Ever-Victorious," Burgevine's next proposal was the bold one of eliminating as between themselves all questions of conflicting loyalty to the respective belligerents by throwing over both, and by joining forces on their own account, to capture Soochow, and there raise an army to march on Peking. It was a partnership which did in nowise commend itself to Gordon, but the proposal served to show how shrewd Li Hung-chang had been in his estimate of the deposed leader.

IV. THE LAY-OSBORN FLOTILLA.

Orders sent through Mr Hart to Mr Lay—Fleet equipped under Captain Osborn, R.N.—Ratification of their agreements refused in Peking—Government would not place foreigners in a position of authority—Misunderstandings and final sacrifice of Mr Lay—Ships paid off and sold—Crucial question the recapture of Nanking.

The invincible distrust of foreign auxiliaries which dominates Chinese policy and prevents the empire from ever having an army or a navy, received another signal illustration in the same year in the great fiasco of the Lay-Osborn flotilla. Mr H. N. Lay, Inspector-General of Chinese Maritime Customs, was in England on leave in 1861, his *locum tenens* in Peking being Mr (now Sir) Robert Hart. Conferences with the Chinese Ministers on the naval weakness of the empire resulted in

a very important decision, in consequence of which Mr Hart was empowered to send to Mr Lay orders for certain armed vessels to be officered and manned by Englishmen. Mr Lay executed the rather "large order" according to his lights, engaging Captain Sherard Osborn to command the fleet, which was equipped on a war-footing. The foreign enlistment difficulties of the British Government were overcome, as the Government was by that time ready to go to any length in assisting the Government of China. The fleet duly arrived in China, and Mr Lay and Captain Osborn presented themselves in Peking to obtain ratification of their agreements from the Imperial Government. This was refused, the force was disbanded, and the ships sold, at a heavy pecuniary sacrifice to the Chinese, for they made no demur about payment.

The rock on which the scheme seemed to split was the contention of Mr Lay that the fleet was imperial, and that the commodore should take no orders from viceroys or provincial authorities, but only from the emperor, and through Mr Lay himself. This was a shock to the very edifice of Chinese Government, conceived of as feasible only under the belief that in its helpless condition the Government must accede to anything. But the scheme was really impossible. So also, however, was the alternative of provincialising the naval force, as has been shown by subsequent failures in the attempt to use the services of British officers in the Chinese navy. Such an instance of reckoning without your host was never heard of before or since. It was like a practical joke on a titanic scale. The ships were actually there, manned, officered, and armed. It was a dangerous knot, which had to be

promptly cut or untied. Following the line of least resistance, Mr Lay was made the scapegoat, on whose head the Minister "laid both his hands" — rather heavily—"confessing over him the iniquities of all," and sending him away into the wilderness. In the general interest the sacrifice of Mr Lay was perhaps the safest way out of the imbroglio, for he was a pugnacious little man in whose hands despotic power might have been attended with inconvenience. Nevertheless, the blame of the failure belonged to all the parties concerned — to Prince Kung, Wênsiang, Mr Hart, Mr Bruce, and the British Government. They each entered into the scheme with different ideas, more or less vague, except Mr Lay's own, which had perforce to be reduced to the definite when he came to draw up contracts with British naval officers, and to meet the strict requirements of British law. The Chinese Ministers of course could have no conception what a foreign-equipped navy really meant, nor had they probably fully divulged what was really in their mind; Mr Lay and Mr Hart were young men with large ideas, but without experience; Mr Bruce was a man of the world who had seen service, and was, from his position, the most responsible of them all, and therefore the most culpable in deceiving himself, and allowing the British Government to be misled. He approved of the project, or it could never have been carried out. But what was it precisely that he approved of? He "saw with pleasure that Captain Osborn was about to reorganise the preventive service" (October 6, 1862), and as late as February 8, 1863, he wrote to Prince Kung of the "speedy arrival of the steam flotilla which your Imperial Highness has so

wisely ordered"—as if it were a pair of official boots! Yet on the arrival of the flotilla it was found that everybody concerned was at cross-purposes, and the question naturally suggests itself, what steps her Majesty's Minister had taken to satisfy himself as to the real intentions of Prince Kung, whether they had been properly transmitted by Mr Hart and correctly interpreted by Mr Lay and fully communicated to her Majesty's Government. It appears that Mr Bruce had, in fact, undergone a change of mind—induced, no doubt, by cogent considerations—during Mr Lay's final sojourn in Peking. Having received a message from the Minister urging a stiff attitude with the Chinese Government and promising the full support of the Legation, Mr Lay proceeded to the Yamên and laid down the law strongly, as his manner was, in the full assurance that he had the British Minister at his back. But after thus burning his boats he found himself abandoned, for reasons of State which he was unable to appreciate. Such was the account of the crisis given at the time by Mr Lay himself to a confidential friend then residing in Peking. For the Chinese Government the scheme was necessarily a leap in the dark. For the British Government it involved a violent reversal of recently declared policy, and on a most important issue. It was consequently a case where extreme and minute precautions against possible misunderstandings would not have been superfluous, yet—so far as has yet been made public, for there is doubtless a missing link in the record—such seem to have been wholly absent from the inception of the enterprise.

The crux of the question, no doubt, was the position

of Nanking. The lever Mr Lay employed to secure acceptance of his conditions was the prospect of the immediate capture of the Taiping capital, against which the provincial Government, represented by the Viceroy Tsêng, his brother, and the governor of Kiangsu, Li, were expending their forces. The temptation was exceedingly strong to close with Lay and secure the services — probably much overrated for that particular object — of the new flotilla, were it even by recourse to some ambiguous phrase which might leave a loophole of escape from the agreement when its immediate object had been served. Something like this might have been attempted but for the uncompromising attitude of Li Hung-chang, for it was he who smashed the flotilla scheme. It was true, he allowed, that the assistance of the ships would enable the viceroy's forces to capture the city at once; but, he added confidently, we shall succeed in time by our own resources, and it were better to lose the city and the province, and even the empire itself, than to place such power as Lay demanded in the hands of any foreigner. Burgevine was fresh in the *futai's* mind — was indeed at that very time in the rebel camp near him. Li's arguments clinched the matter. The flotilla was never commissioned. The whole chapter of experiences of the campaign in Kiangsu has left a vivid impression on the mind of Li Hung-chang: it was the most interesting period of his life, but no incident of it imparts such vivacity to his reminiscences as that of the Lay-Osborn fleet. Nothing warms him to dramatic locution like a reference to that episode.

V. THE END OF THE REBELLION.

Gordon's brilliant campaign — His quarrel with Li Hung-chang — And reconciliation—Other French and English officers co-operate in suppression of rebellion—Russian aid offered.

Gordon's campaigning lasted one year: it was marked by great successes, sundry reverses, more than one crisis, and many discouragements. The famous quarrel with the *futai* Li was illustrative of several points of great utility to be borne in mind in considering the working relations of Eastern and Western peoples; but perhaps its chief interest lay in its revelation of the independent and dominating character of Gordon himself, which was his distinguishing mark through life. After a confused and scarcely intelligible bargain with the rebel chiefs at Soochow, by which their lives were to be spared, they were beheaded by order of Li. Gordon resented this, and, like another Achilles, withdrew to his tent. For this he was warmly applauded by General Brown, Mr Bruce, and the Foreign Office, who all denounced Li as the most odious criminal, with whom no further communication should be held. When, two months later, Gordon, without consultation with any of these parties, but not without friendly advice, changed his mind, resumed his friendship with the governor and active operations in the field, the same chorus of approval greeted his action as had previously been pronounced of his inaction. Mr Bruce wrote on February 10, 1864, to Prince Kung, among other things, that "Major Gordon is to be relieved from any communication with Governor

Li." Within a week Gordon, of his own motion, had abandoned that position, leaving to the Minister to explain the change of attitude in any way he pleased, which he did by resort to that token coinage of diplomatic fiction which serves the domestic purposes of the craft, but has no market-value outside its conventional domain. An able explanatory letter from Mr Hart, the new Inspector-General of Customs, who investigated the transaction on the spot, would have afforded to the Minister colourable grounds for "revision" of the earlier judgment, had he been allowed time to avail himself of it. But Gordon's action forced his hand, and left him no choice but to acquiesce first and find his reasons afterwards. The Foreign Office, however, being at a distance, could not be swung back again so quickly, and they had, on the impulse of the first advices, withdrawn their sanction for Major Gordon's serving the Chinese at all. This order reached him after he had, on his own motion, definitely resigned the service, so that there was no further clashing of authorities. Though the force contributed materially to the suppression of the rebellion, the final act, the capture of Nanking, was left to the unaided resources of the Viceroy Tsêng.

Not the least of Gordon's successes was the peaceable dissolution of the force when it had done its work; for the establishment was, for its size, enormously costly, and it was a two-edged sword in the hands of the Chinese. The "Ever-Victorious Army" was happy in the opportuneness of its death. A prolonged existence might easily have dispelled the wonderful prestige it had gained in its short career and limited scope. Perhaps, after all, its place in history owes everything to

the personality of its last leader, whose legacy to mankind is not so much a catalogue of achievements as a life—immortal.

The renown of Gordon and the brilliancy of his exploits have thrown unduly into the shade the Anglo-Chinese and Franco-Chinese campaign in the neighbouring province of Chêkiang, which had Ningpo for its sea base. In their degree these operations were no less essential to the ultimate overthrow of the rebellion than those in the province of Kiangsu, and, among many others, the names of Prosper Giquel, who afterwards managed the arsenal at the Pagoda anchorage, Foochow, and of the large-hearted bishop, Mgr. Delaplace, afterwards translated to the metropolitan see, where he died, deserve to be had in remembrance. Sundry risings in other provinces caused trouble and apprehension; but we may, for the purposes of this narrative, consider that the year 1864 witnessed the closing scene of the great rebellion.

It would be impossible, within any reasonable space, to follow even in outline the course of that stupendous devastation, exceeding in its wanton waste of human life the horrors of the Thirty Years' War in Germany: our concern has been only with that side of the movement with which foreign nations were forced into contact, with its political bearing, and its influence on the position of the Chinese Government. It happened that only two of the Powers were directly concerned in offensive operations against the rebels, but in the task of suppression they had the moral support of them all. Indeed, but for the French and English activity it seems probable that Russia was ready single-handed to undertake the whole business. The Russian Govern-

ment from time to time signified its approval of the action taken by the French and English in assisting the Chinese Government to put down the rebellion. Russia was included in the thanks of the Chinese to their foreign allies; she had at least furnished material in the shape of "10,000 rifles and several cannons." These arrived in Peking, after a protracted journey, at a time when the Russian Minister deemed it expedient to explain to his British colleagues that the arms had reference only to the rebellion. Moreover, Russia had, or professed to have, serious intentions of sending a large force of her own to co-operate in its suppression. M. Petchroff, a member of the Russian Legation, spent a month in Shanghai in the autumn of 1862 in frequent conferences on this subject with the Chinese authorities, the report of which he carried in person to Admiral Popoff, who was at the time in Japan. M. Petchroff called upon the British admiral while in Shanghai, and informed him of this project. It was not carried out, as Prince Gortchakoff explained to Lord Napier, because the Russian Government had not force enough available to render effective assistance, but they wished to show the Chinese that they were in hearty sympathy with the Anglo-French policy, and might, for moral effect, show their flag in co-operation, so far as prudence would allow.

The importance of putting an end to the rebellion, and the value of foreign aid in doing so, were fully realised by the Peking Government. Of this the abortive, but costly, Osborn flotilla furnished proof enough; and the honours bestowed on Gordon by imperial decree were an expression of the unspeakable

relief which was felt in the palace at the dispelling of the hideous nightmare. A final decree summing up the movement, in a tone of restrained sincerity not usual in these conventional documents, says: "Words cannot convey any idea of the misery and desolation he [the Taiping chief] caused; the measure of his iniquity was full, and the wrath of both gods and men was roused against him."

VI. EVACUATION OF CANTON.

Good feeling and compliments on both sides—Mr Parkes's able administration of the city.

An event which passed off without the slightest sensation, because without hitch, was the evacuation of Canton by the Allied troops in October 1861. Were it only for one clause in the proclamation issued by the high Chinese authorities on the occasion, this transaction would form a valuable historical landmark:—

During the occupation of Canton by the allied troops of England and France during a period of four years, their conduct has never been otherwise than friendly towards the military and people of the whole city, and the military and people having also corresponded with courtesy and friendship, harmony has been maintained from first to last. Now that the troops are being withdrawn, the consuls of England and France will continue to reside within the city, while the merchants and people of all nations will constantly pass in and out, or reside therein at their pleasure. It remains the duty of yourselves, the military and people, to continue to them the same respectful and courteous relations that have prevailed during the occupation.

Compare this with the state of things existing only three years before! Much of the success of the occupation and its good permanent results were unquestionably due to the high qualities of Parkes, the British commissioner, who thus modestly refers to the matter in his despatch: "The confidence of the people in a strong and inoppressive Government, added to their own governable character, materially facilitated the task of maintaining order in a vast and most intricate city containing a population of upwards of 1,000,000 inhabitants." The "Canton question" was thus finally disposed of to the satisfaction of all parties.

VII. DEATH OF THE EMPEROR.

His flight from the capital—Succession of his son—Regency of the two empresses—Prince Kung's sanguinary *coup d'état.*

Next in importance to the suppression of the Taiping rebellion, the death of the Emperor Hsienfêng marked the period we are now considering. That unfortunate monarch, who deserted his capital against the strongest remonstrances of his advisers, on the approach of the Allied forces, died at his hiding-place in August 1861, and his only son was proclaimed in his stead under the style of Tungchih. The new emperor was a child, and provision had to be made for a regency. How this regency fell into the hands of two empresses—one the mother of the young emperor, the other the true widow of the deceased—was not very well understood by the foreigners then in the capital. Prince Kung's *coup d'état*, by which the

three male members of the regency were elaborately arraigned and then assassinated, was not organised to get rid of any imaginary "anti-foreign faction," as was too easily assumed at the time, but simply and solely to place the empire at the feet of himself and the emperor's mother. "Parties" in Peking have always been, and are to this day, a puzzle to foreigners, who, having seldom at the moment any trustworthy means of informing themselves, are apt to be carried away by "cries," sometimes got up for the purpose of misleading them,—for the Chinese are not at all averse from turning to account the half knowledge on which foreigners are prone to form their opinions.

VIII. INFLUENCE OF THESE EVENTS ON PROGRESS OF DIPLOMACY.

Inadequacy of foreign diplomacy—Absence of sovereign—Allies committed to protection of China—Coercion impossible—Large outlook of Mr Bruce—The provincial *versus* imperial administration—Attempt to force Central Government to coerce provincial—Contemptuous attitude of Chinese Ministers—Sir F. Bruce's despair—He clutches at various straws—General reaction of Chinese.

How did these various occurrences influence the progress of diplomatic relations with the Government? We have seen that diplomacy in Peking was a venture launched on imported capital, which, meeting with no indigenous support, was doomed from the first to feed upon itself. There was no dialect through which the foreign idea could translate itself to Chinese comprehension, no medium by which Chinese political conceptions could be made intelligible to the foreigner. When

Gordon could not get his meaning filtered through an interpreter, he called for a dictionary and put his finger on the word "idiotcy"—and the most orthodox interpreting could not get much beyond this point in establishing a common currency for the interchange of national ideas. The initial difficulty in imposing foreign forms, foreign terms, foreign procedure — of revolutionising at a stroke a system of administration petrified by ancient usage—would have existed even if the statesmen of China had been sincere converts to the innovation. The contrary was, of course, the case: they were as much opposed to the new relations as they had been to the military invasion itself. No help, therefore, was to be expected from the Chinese side in creating a workable scheme of international intercourse. They desired nothing of that kind, their ambition soaring no higher than the creation of a buffer against which external impulsion might expend its force. That buffer was the Tsungli-Yamên. Foreign diplomacy, therefore, if it were to subsist at all, must subsist on its own resources, the foundation of which was force. The force that brought foreigners to Peking must, either *in esse* or *in posse*, for an indefinite time keep them there and render them efficient. Force no doubt would have enabled the foreign Ministers to bring about even those structural changes in the Chinese system which were necessary to clear the ground for the operation of their diplomacy. But if there was one thing more than another of which Western Governments were determined to convince themselves, it was that the law of force was finally abrogated in China; that on a certain day at a certain hour, coincident with the signing (by force) of a sheet

of paper, the spirit of hostility had departed from the Chinese mind; and that the law of love and reason was, without preamble, to take the place of that which had brought about the new relations. Whether believed in or not, this curious paradox was to be the rule of all future action.

The game that opens with the "king" off the board, and is afterwards continued with the "queen" protected, is an obviously impossible one. The foreign Ministers had to do with a Government of irresponsibility, and instead of teaching its members from the outset to recognise their new obligations — training them as children, which as regards foreign matters they really were — the foreign Ministers began by treating the Chinese Government rather as an infant too delicate for discipline, with the familiar results of such treatment. The diplomats betrayed so much anxiety to lure the sovereign back to his palace, that the Chinese Ministers soon learned to exploit this feeling for their own ends. That such and such a concession "would have a good effect at Jêho" was inducement enough to the foreign representatives to waive one point after another in the transaction of public business. When the emperor died, after six months of this *régime* of indulgence, the position was changed materially for the worse,—for the diplomats had now a veritable infant on their hands, with a female regent "behind the curtain." No prospect thenceforth of even the initial formality of delivering letters of credence until the child should grow up, by which time many things might happen. Thus the European scheme of diplomacy, which was to have been imposed bodily on the Court of Peking, stumbled

heavily on the threshold, and never recovered itself. But the Chinese recovered. Their fear of the "fierce barbarians" disappeared as they saw them throw away their weapons, and the process was resumed by which the fruits of the war and of the treaties of peace were gradually nibbled away.

And of course the whole idea of coercing the Imperial Government, even had it ever been entertained, was openly reduced to nullity when the foreign Powers interfered for the suppression of the rebellion. The Allies could not knock down with one hand what they were propping up with the other, and thus the Imperial Government not only enjoyed immunity, but knew that they possessed it,—that their late conquerors were now fully committed to the upholding of the integrity of China and the maintenance of the dynasty. Any liberties might consequently be taken: remonstrances from the foreigners would be loud in proportion to their hollowness, but the barbarians could not attack a citadel full of their own hostages.

Although remoteness from the scene of action and imperfect acquaintance with local requirements were apt to invalidate his conclusions on points of detail, and to compel him occasionally to follow where he might have been expected to guide the action of his subordinate executive, yet whenever Sir Frederick Bruce delivered his mind on the position of China and her foreign relations as a whole, his views were large, luminous, and statesmanlike. He foresaw from the first what the degradation of the Chinese Government must inevitably lead to. His outlook is revealed in a brief sentence in one of his earlier despatches: "The weakness of China rather than her

strength is likely to create a fresh Eastern question in these seas." There need be little doubt that that idea dominated his Chinese diplomacy. Severity, or even strictness, may well have seemed on the face of the matter inconsistent with the pious wish to strengthen China, yet we now know that what she then most needed was to be braced up to the fulfilment of her obligations as a necessity of her own wellbeing.

The field of diplomacy in the orthodox sense being closed, and there being no foreign interests in Peking, the subject-matter for the Ministers' activity was furnished entirely from the trading-ports. Of these there were fifteen open in 1861. The kind of questions which arose may be generally defined as claims arising out of breaches of treaty by provincial officials, for which redress was sought from the Central Government. This was a reversal of Chinese methods, which, even had the Government been well disposed, would not have been easy to effect; and as the Government was hostile, difficulty became impossibility. The British Minister after a year's trial began to realise the magnitude of his Sisyphean task. "In a country like China," he wrote to the Foreign Office in July 1862, "where the principles of administration differ entirely from those practised by us, the conclusion of a treaty is the commencement, not the termination, of difficulties."

To a consul he wrote at the same time: "The important result to be gained by the establishment of direct relations with the Government of Peking is the avoidance of local acts of violence. . . . Time will elapse before the new system will work smoothly

and efficiently, . . . but you must not go beyond pacific efforts to remedy the abuses complained of." A few months later, in a general circular to consuls, he thus carefully recapitulated the instruction:—

> The object to be attained is that of forcing the local officials to observe the treaty . . . through the pressure brought to bear upon them by the Peking Government, and thus escape from the false position in which we have hitherto been placed of coercing the local authorities and people, and thus doing the work of the Imperial Government. To initiate this new system of relations is a task which can only be effected gradually and patiently; but the attempt must be steadily and perseveringly made, in order that the Chinese Government may be forced to teach its people, &c.

And at the same time he summed up the situation to the Foreign Office in these words: "Our relations with China cannot be put upon a safe footing until the Imperial Government itself compels its local officers to observe treaties"—a matter in which the Central Government itself most needed compulsion!

But all this about "forcing" the local officials and "forcing" the Imperial Government, without using any force, recalls the ancient Chinese maxim of "ruling barbarians by misrule." The world rested securely enough on the tortoise, but what did the tortoise itself rest on? With grim satisfaction must the Chinese Ministers have watched the foreigners entering on a desert campaign where they would exhaust their strength without reaching the enemy. The warnings and threats which alone the Minister allowed himself to use to enforce his demands or his admonitions, as the case might be, were to the Chinese mere blank cartridge. Prince Kung, replying to one of those

minatory despatches, "imagines that his Excellency uses this outspoken language for the purpose of stimulating the Chinese Government to activity. His Highness is sure that it is not his Excellency's desire to act in the manner indicated." And so on indefinitely. The impression made on the Chinese Government by the force of foreign diplomacy was likened by an American Minister twenty years afterwards to "boxing a feather-bed." The policy above described, inaugurated by Mr Bruce and followed consistently by the British Government, was pithily termed by Lord Salisbury, when in Opposition, as an "ideal policy" in pursuit of which the concrete interests of the country were allowed to lapse.

It would be tedious to trace in detail the process of disintegration of treaty rights which followed these interesting overtures. It will be more to the purpose to cite the British Minister's review of the results twelve months later in a despatch to Prince Kung. This despatch and the reply to it were deemed so important at the time that they were separately called for by the House of Commons, and were published as independent Blue Books (Nos. 6 and 8, 1864):—

Sir Frederick Bruce wished the Prince of Kung to understand that he had reason to be greatly dissatisfied

1. With the general disregard of treaty provisions manifested at the ports.
2. With the tone of the Government generally towards foreigners.

It is entirely due to the exertions of the Allied forces that Shanghai and Ningpo are not now in rebel possession. Had Shanghai fallen, the imperial authority would have received a blow from which it could never have recovered. . . .

Sir F. Bruce did not look for any extraordinary demon-

stration of gratitude for these services, but he had hoped that the Central Government would at least have insisted on the faithful observance of the treaty at the ports. He had hoped also that it would have addressed itself with some increase of vigour to the organisation of a competent executive.

These expectations have not been realised. At several of the ports the treaty is daily broken in matters great and small; and the Central Government, if not unwilling, shows itself unable to enforce a better order of things. The orders sent by the Foreign Board, when Sir Frederick Bruce complains, are not carried out, either because the local authorities do not stand in awe of the Foreign Board or because they do not believe the Foreign Board issues them in earnest. . . .

The Foreign Board has gone through the form of issuing instructions, but the causes of complaint remain as they were, either because the local authorities do not fear or because the Foreign Board does not care. Seeing that none of the authorities complained of have been punished or removed, that officials notoriously hostile to foreigners have been appointed to places in which they have increased opportunity of indulging in their anti-foreign tendencies, while officials of friendly disposition have been withdrawn, Sir Frederick Bruce is induced, however reluctantly, to infer that if the Imperial Government be not adverse to friendly intercourse, it is, at all events, indisposed to do what is necessary to teach the people and local authorities that China is sincerely desirous of friendly relations with foreign Powers. . . .

It is for the Chinese Government to consider whether it will listen to these warnings, &c.

Prince Kung's Reply, 19*th June* 1863.

With reference to the proposition on which the British Minister's note insists, that the treaty should rank with the law, the Prince has to observe that the principle that the treaty is identical with the laws of the Imperial Government, and that breach of treaty is the same thing as violation of the law, is the principle on which the Government of China proceeds, and its only desire is that foreign nations should regard the treaty in the same light. . . .

As regards the cases still undetermined in the provinces,

the Prince hopes that the British Minister will refer to the record and inform him, case by case, of the particulars of each, and the Yamên will at once write to the Provincial Governments concerned to hurry them with the cases enumerated. . . .

Sir Frederick Bruce's Reply, July 2, 1863.

Your Imperial Highness states in explicit terms that the Government of China recognises the treaties as the law of the empire in its relations with foreigners, and that breaches of treaty are considered violations of those laws. But the despatch of your Imperial Highness contains nothing to show that this principle will be carried out in practice. I stated instances in which the authorities, in spite of the remonstrances of her Majesty's consul, had deliberately set aside the letter of the treaty for no other object than to curtail the privileges of her Majesty's subjects. Your Imperial Highness in your reply does not allude to these cases, nor do you inform me that any steps have been taken to remedy these grievances or to prevent a repetition of such conduct. I am simply requested to send in a list of the grievances complained of; and I am informed that the local authorities will be urged to settle them with speed. Such a proposal is entirely unsatisfactory; for what reason have I to suppose that the instructions now to be sent by your Imperial Highness will be attended to, when I see that the orders which I am assured were given by your Imperial Highness for the redress of outrages such as . . . have been disobeyed?

In these State Papers the relations present and prospective between China and the outer world are accurately represented. Putting aside local and temporary questions, the despatches might be dated 1873, 1883, or 1893, for the position remained substantially the same during the three decades.

The attitude of the British Minister we see to be one of hopeless pleading and vague admonition; of the Chinese Ministers, elastic resistance. One wonders how far, under the mask of dull decorum, the Chinese

entered into the real humour of the situation: foreigners chafing impotently, but with their teeth drawn, occupying themselves largely with the preservation of China and the dynasty; urging reforms, military, financial, and administrative, while putting up with the non-fulfilment of the commonest obligations.

Sir F. Bruce was much too wise a man not to be perfectly conscious of the negative result of foreign diplomacy in Peking. His private letters, some of which were published by Mr Lay in 1864, are more emphatic on the point than his public despatches. He saw it was a case for desperate remedies, but unfortunately he had no remedy except such as aggravated the disease. Like a drowning man, Sir Frederick Bruce clutched at one straw, then another—first at the inspectorate of customs, then at the collective body of his colleagues—to redress the balance which lay so heavily against him. We see in the despatch of June 12, 1863, the inception of what became known as the "co-operative policy." That was an arrangement by which the cause of one foreigner was to be made the cause of all, so that the treaty Powers might present a solid front to the Chinese. Unfortunately such a policy bears no fruit, since half-a-dozen Powers with separate interests, and of varying tempers, can only unite in doing nothing. The co-operative policy, therefore, by tying the hands of all the Powers, rendered the Chinese more secure than ever from outside interference.

From Sir Frederick Bruce's despatches it may be gathered that the reason for the non-success of the Peking diplomacy was, that it was not founded on fact. It assumed that the Government of China was cen-

tralised instead of decentralised; that the administration of the empire hinged on the initiative of Peking, from which distant point the resident Ministers could protect their respective national interests throughout the empire. This hypothesis, which might have graced an academic debate, was acted upon as if it was a reality, and the struggle to make it so has absorbed the resources of diplomacy for forty years. The real fact, however, was quite otherwise. The distinctive character of Chinese Government is, not autocracy, but democracy and provincial autonomy. The springs of action work from below, not from above, and to reverse this order of the ages was to convert a court of appeal into a court of first instance: to sue for a tradesman's debt before the Lord Chancellor, requiring the legal machinery to be first turned upside down. Diplomacy in China has thus been a disheartening effort to drive in a wedge by its thick end without adequate leverage. It is possible, indeed, that force might have accomplished even as much as that, but force was the one thing the use of which was proscribed.

The redress of grievances being sought not where it could have been exacted, at the point affected, but in the capital, the Central Government was called on to exercise over the provincial officials a kind of control which had never been exercised before. The provincial officials, relieved from the local pressure which they respected, easily evaded the novel and unconstitutional interference of the capital, and violated the treaties with an impunity unknown in the days before the admission of the foreign Ministers to Peking. The treaties, no doubt, had become the

"law of the land" so far as a mere barbarian phrase could make them so, but a full-grown tree of Western legality could not so easily transplant itself to an alien and refractory soil. The argument from legality appealed, therefore, to the ear only. The practical conclusion to which Sir Frederick Bruce was led is very simply stated in two paragraphs of his letters to Prince Kung: "My object has been to seek redress through the Imperial Government, and to do away with the necessity of seeking redress by forcible demonstrations at the ports. But it is evident that the reluctance of your Imperial Highness to enter frankly into this policy renders my efforts ineffectual." "Either the Imperial Government is unwilling to use its influence to cause the treaties to be fairly carried out, or it has not the power to cause its orders to be obeyed." Sir Frederick would have hit still nearer the mark if he had omitted the "either," "or," and said simply the Imperial Government was *both* unwilling and unable.

Notwithstanding these definite views, the experiment of forcing a centralisation which would have been a revolution on the unintelligible Government of China had to be continued through many weary years that were to follow, during which time the rights conferred by treaty on foreigners fell more and more into abeyance.

The progress in that direction made in the two first years is thus summarised by Mr H. N. Lay, the first Inspector-General of Customs, on his return to China in 1863:—

When I left China the emperor's Government, under the pressure of necessity, and with the beneficial terror established

by the Allied foray to Peking in 1860 fresh in their recollection, was in the best of moods, willing to be guided, grateful for help, and in return for that help prepared to do what was right by the foreigner. What did I find on my return? The face of things was entirely changed. There was the old insolent demeanour, the nonsensical language of exclusion, the open mockery of all treaties. . . . In short, all the ground gained by the treaty of 1858 had been frittered away, and we were thrust back into the position we occupied before the war, —one of helpless remonstrance and impotent menace; . . . the labour of years lost through egregious mismanagement. The Foreign Board looked upon our European representatives as so many *rois fainéants*. . . . Prince Kung was no longer accessible. . . . He professed to be engaged with more important matters.

APPENDIX I.

NOTE ON OUR PRESENT POSITION AND THE STATE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH CHINA, BY CONSUL ALCOCK, JANUARY 19, 1849.

Section I.

THE lesson of the past is very legibly written in the history of our relations,—oppression in the Chinese, increased by submission in the English. Resistance of the latter followed by concession in the former may be read in every stage, and the influence of the late war, beyond the tangible effects embodied in the provisions of the treaties, has been limited very much to outward forms: there is reason to suspect that the policy of the Chinese has been masked, not changed.

The same arrogant and hostile spirit exists, and their policy is still to degrade foreigners in the eyes of the people, and to offer every obstacle which may *with safety* be interposed to any extended intercourse,—objects which they seek to carry out by various covert and indirect means. In this sense the letter of the treaty is often quoted, but any large interpretation can only be secured under a moral compulsion, as the least objectionable alternative. This may not, perhaps, be wholly owing to bad faith, for distrust and fear of foreigners probably influences the result. Hence all the principal advantages enjoyed under the treaty are only held by a species of personal tenure of precarious character, and a consul at one of the ports may lose more in a week than her Majesty's Government may find it easy to recover with costly and embarrassing efforts in a year. Our present relations consist in a never-ceasing struggle, under veiled appearances of amity; and the treaty extorted by force is generally sought to be eluded by cunning. They have no objection to the foreign trade as one of the elements of their

own prosperity, though they much underrate its importance; but to make it wholly acceptable [to them], the former humiliating conditions are wanting.

The whole effort of the Chinese rulers seems to be limited to preserving peace as the first object, and, so far as may be compatible with this, to assimilate our present to our ancient position as the second.

From the general bearing of our relations in connection with the past and the future, the nature and extent of the disadvantages under which we labour may be easily deduced:—

1. Local insecurity to person and property at Canton.
2. Want of access to the first markets and of the means of pushing and verifying the consumption of our manufactures in the interior.
3. Ill-adjusted rates of duty on several important articles.
4. Want of reciprocity and equality in our political relations, and a certain inferiority in our position social and political.

By the first we are menaced with perpetual danger of fatal collision and interruption to our commerce, while our general position is at the same time prejudiced. By the second we are deprived of any large market for our goods, and pay dearer for native produce. By the third the Straits, Indian, and the native carrying trade are all impeded in their growth and dwarfed in their proportions; and by the fourth insuperable difficulties in remedying abuses or amending our relations are encountered, our only means of action being upon Canton and its governor, acting as an imperial commissioner.

The full and rapid development of our commerce, a new and profitable field for our manufactures, and a better guarantee for the maintenance of our friendly relations, are the chief advantages to be sought in the removal of these disabilities.

The practicability of maintaining our relations on their present unsatisfactory footing in the south must be very doubtful, nor is there much hope that any of the essential advantages above specified may be gained incidentally in the natural progress of time, and still less that the grounds of alarm should of themselves disappear. The causes of all that is bad in our position spring from too deep a source, and may be traced too far back, to admit of any such hope: a rooted conviction in the minds of a whole population, derived from

traditional knowledge of the humiliating and derogatory position voluntarily accepted by foreigners, cannot be effaced by a treaty, or even a short successful war which passed over the city that was the offending cause almost harmless. How far it may be possible to convert popular contempt and dislike into respect and fear, we cannot judge from experience: hitherto, in the steps taken to that end, either too much or too little has been attempted.

There are practical difficulties of a peculiar and altogether local character [it is obvious] to any immediate amelioration of our position at Canton which do not exist elsewhere. Setting aside these considerations, it will be found that all that is most valuable and important in the advantages to be desired are of a nature to be granted by the sole exercise of the emperor's will: greater freedom of access, the modification of half-a-dozen items in the tariff, even the exchange of envoys between the two Courts, if this were deemed expedient, are all matters to be decided by a stroke of the vermilion pencil. No hostile populations interpose a practical negative to concessions such as these. The grounds upon which we may claim the revisal of some of the provisions of existing treaties are derived from the well-established conditions of all permanent relations of a friendly and commercial character between sovereign States in the civilised world.

We may claim of right a modification of the basis of our relations on the injury resulting to our interests from the bad faith or impuissance (it matters little which) of the Chinese Government in giving execution to the treaties in force. We may insist upon prejudicial limits being abolished, since they have plainly failed in their ostensible object to secure freedom from molestation or injury which was the condition of their acceptance.

If it be the traditional policy of the Tartar dynasty to keep foreigners at the outer confines of the empire and in a degrading position, it may with better justice be the policy of Great Britain to obtain a direct action upon their centre, and freedom from idle and vexatious restrictions. The right of a nation to interdict intercourse and commerce, and therefore to determine upon what conditions it shall exist, is but an imperfect right, and subject to such modifications as the rights of other nations to the use of innocent objects of utility dictate;

and the refusal of a common right is an abuse of the sovereign power, and an injury to be resisted.

China, however disposed its rulers may be to deny the fact, is one of a community of nations with common rights and obligations, and any claim to exemption from the recognised terms of national intercourse is inadmissible in the interest of all other countries. To admit such a right of exemption would be to allow the arrogated superiority in power and civilisation, and to pamper the hostile conceit of her people.

So long as the sovereign States of Europe will permit so obvious an inference it cannot be matter of surprise, and scarcely subject of reproach, to the Chinese, that they should be so ready to assert and so pertinacious in acting upon it.

But even if exclusion from the territories, from all trade and intercourse, were an absolute right in the first instance, the Chinese have forfeited all claim to its exercise—first, by voluntarily entering into relations political and commercial in ages past with other States and people, by exchange of embassies, by opening their ports and territories and encouraging trade; and secondly, by aggressive wars and invasion of the territory of Europe by the Tartar and Mongolian races who have ruled the country.

China preserves her undoubted right of self-preservation as a political society and an empire, but this does not involve the incidental right of interdicting intercourse, because her own history shows that danger does not necessarily follow unlimited access, since as late as the seventeenth century such free communication existed with foreigners; and secondly, because the right of decision must be shared by the interdicted party.

Section II.

It is not enough, however, to determine the abstract principles upon which a policy may be founded—that which is just may not always be most expedient, and if both the one and the other, it may not be practicable.

The chief difficulties to be encountered in any attempt to place our relations on an improved basis may be traced to three principal sources:—

The Canton popular traditions and hostility.
The treaties in force.
The contraband trade in opium.

The characteristic features of our position at Canton and their origin are too well known to require illustration. To our political relations before the war, and the humble and in every way derogatory attitude assumed towards the Chinese, is clearly to be traced their present insolence, assumed superiority, and hostility on finding it questioned.

The principle of narrow boundaries and restricted limits confirmed by the Treaty of Nanking virtually sanctioned the tradition of the past, which no mere verbal assertion of equality thus practically contradicted can modify. The repudiation of this principle and the establishment of a different footing seem to be essential to our political equality, which would form the best foundation of an improved social and commercial position, most especially in the south. Were our chief political relations with the Chinese Government not centred at Canton, it is very evident that that port would lose much of the importance which now attaches to the sayings and doings of its turbulent mob and impracticable authorities. Were the centre of our political action anywhere else, the local difficulties, troublesome as they are, must soon merge into comparative insignificance, and such a measure as this would seem an easier task to accomplish than to change the habits and the prejudices of a whole population.

If we turn from Canton and its unsatisfactory history of oriental insolence and presumption on the one side, and undue submission to their exigencies on the other, and consider the exemption from all such characteristics at Shanghai, the respective influences of the treaties and of local circumstances may be deduced by a comparison of the two chief ports.

The various concurring circumstances terminating in the Tsingpu outrage, which threatened to approximate the position of the British at Shanghai to that occupied at Canton, have been detailed in the correspondence of the period. The position was seriously affected by the comparative immunity of whole villages participating in the murders at Canton in the previous year, by the atrocious features of the crime itself, and by the assumed necessity of the consul's inaction pending a reference to her Majesty's plenipotentiary, occupying several weeks.

Prompt redress was imperiously demanded by the interests at stake and the sinister aspect of affairs, and to enforce this coercive means were employed, leaving nothing to be desired.

The most important of the results obtained was the demonstration of a power to shift the centre of action from a port where no progress could be made to a vulnerable point nearer to Peking where immediate attention could be commanded, and this was supplied by the mission to Nanking.

From these two circumstances—the serious deterioration of our position, and the prompt and efficacious remedy provided—an important conclusion may be drawn as to our means of effecting any required change in our relations.

In an empire vast in area as China, with an overflowing population, it is no slight advantage to be enabled, without a single battle, to invest and vigorously blockade the capital; and this it is in our power to effect by a small squadron at the mouth of the Grand Canal in the early spring, when Peking is dependent for its supplies for the year on the arrival of the grain and tribute junks by that channel. A more effective means of coercion this than the destruction of twenty cities on the confines of the Chinese territory or on the coast. With a starving Court and population around him, flight or concession appears to be the emperor's only alternatives.

The facility and the certainty with which this object may be attained are important considerations. The insurmountable obstacles to the advance of a European army into the interior are rendered nugatory and altogether unimportant by the knowledge of this highroad to the heart of the empire.

The maintenance of our present relations is probably in no slight degree due to the secret consciousness of their weakness at this point.

In any future policy that may be adopted, therefore, these facts and views are calculated to supersede the necessity for active hostilities, and must tend to avert from a peaceful and industrious population all the worst calamities of war, at the same time that they free her Majesty's Government from the embarrassment of a costly and protracted war *in prospectu*.

A simple and ready resource for commanding attention to any just demands is indeed invaluable in China, and without it there is every reason to believe the Chinese rulers would still be the most impracticable of Orientals. With such a power, no insuperable obstacles exist to the satisfactory solution of difficulties without either costly effort or interruption to the trade of the five ports; and it was the long-matured conviction of our

powerful action, by means of a command over the necessary supplies for Peking, that dictated the course followed in the Tsingpu affair.

The Chinese view of the opium trade and our agency in it forms perhaps the chief obstacle to our taking that high ground with the rulers, and good position with the people, which the extension of our commercial interests demands. Let us look, then, to this opium traffic and the influence it actually exercises upon our position in China.

It is no question here whether opium should be classed in the category of medicines, stimuli, or fatal poisons; the Chinese have decided that for themselves, and regard it only as a poison, and the British as the great producers, carriers, and sellers of the drug, to our own great profit and their undoubted impoverishment and ruin. Nor does their conviction end here: they believe to maintain this traffic we made war and dictated a humiliating peace, and that we are prepared to do so again, if they ventured on any interference to its prejudice.

These opinions may be false or true in their foundation, that is not the question, but, What is the influence they are calculated to exercise? Hostility and distrust can alone be traced to this source. No other feelings flow from it, and the consequences will meet us at every turn of our negotiations, in our daily intercourse, and every changing phase of our relations. As it overshadows with a sinister influence the whole field of our political action, so must it be seriously taken into account and calculated upon as an adverse element in all we attempt in China.

Accepted as *un fait accompli*, the best means of neutralising and counteracting its bad effects are alone to be considered, since the enormous capital, large revenue, and inseparable connection of our legitimate trade with opium, as a means of laying down funds in China, involved in the traffic, precludes all idea of its cessation or removal.

The effective protection lent to the chief opium-dealers, in their capacity of British merchants, resident at the ports under the provisions of the treaty, and the manifest inability of the Chinese either to bring the legal proof we should require against these principals, or of attacking by force their agents in the glaring infraction of the Chinese laws, at the opium stations, no doubt flings an air of insincerity over all our protestations

of non-intervention, while there is mockery in the invitation to assail large fleets of heavily-armed European vessels. Even if the Chinese for a single moment believed in the honesty of our declarations, they know the utter futility of any means of attack they possess against such superior force as the opium fleets present. This is the view taken by the Chinese, who, though they do not confess their own weakness, do not disguise or deny it to themselves.

The obstacles which these opinions create and fling in our path whenever advantages are sought at the hands of the Chinese in furtherance of our national interests are to be overcome before any progress can be made. There are three modes of dealing with them:—

1. By arguments to prove the fallacy of their assumption that we were either the original cause of this traffic, or have now the power to put an end to it, or finally, that it is an unmixed evil.

2. By a modification in the demands we should, without this consideration, be entitled to insist upon.

3. By a mixture of kindness and decision, of instruction and intimidation, and, in last resort, by coercion for the attainment of all just and necessary concessions.

And as we should naturally begin with the first, and may eventually find ourselves compelled to resort to the last, so no doubt it will be expedient many times to combine all the different methods of overcoming the active or inert resistance we encounter in the Chinese rulers.

As to any remedy to be applied to the evils of the opium trade, there seems to be none open to either Government but its legalisation, which would strip it of its contraband character, and remove from the emperor the open reproach to his authority, while it might be made to yield a large revenue to his treasury.

If on a question of national policy or morality, this measure, as the lesser of two evils, is declined, there seems to be no help for the mischief which must accrue to us from being the chief agents in the traffic. But it is useless to disguise from ourselves the injurious influence it will unfailingly exercise upon our political action, when any rights on our part are weighed, and it is this which may entail the necessity of our flinging the weight of the sword into the opposite scale—sheathed

it may be, but not the less significant and compulsory in its effect.

The opium grief and the Canton hostility thus work together and dovetail into each other to our manifest prejudice, that port continuing to enjoy its old privilege of being the great exponent and centre of both. There we meet in their least veiled form the national adverseness to foreigners concentrated and localised—the conviction of injury and loss at our hands from opium, heightened into asperity and bitterness by the arrogance of their tempers and the consciousness of their weakness.

In no other port does it seem likely the same overt expression and concentration of adverse feelings will ever be experienced. It would appear the more important, therefore, to modify the virulent form they assume at Canton, and remove the bad precedent and example incessantly furnished by the Cantonese.

The entrance into the city is obviously a question of principle, not of any *direct* practical advantage in a *commercial* sense. The freedom from annoyance, and security to property, are more truly so, and of these two the latter, by far the most essential and important to our interests, seems only to require more storage room for goods, away from a dense Chinese suburb which renders insurance from risk of fire impossible, and entails upon our merchants all the additional danger of fraud in the Chinese warehouse-keepers, who are of necessity the custodians of our goods.

We cannot hope that any effort of ours or of the emperor will suffice to change at once the character and habits of a people, or even of the population of a city. But the last war has shown that with us it rests to bring at any time the pretensions of the Chinese rulers down to a nearer level with their military power; and if they cannot from inherent weakness do all that may be desirable, neither are they in a position to refuse any concession, clearly at their option to grant, and such are these which it would seem most important to Great Britain to secure: the nature of our demands and the circumstances under which they shall be preferred are considerations of policy and expediency. But the real question, and by far the most important, it will be obvious, is rather what it may be wise to demand, than what it may be possible to obtain. The danger of collision between the rival civilisations of the East and West

has long been foreseen, instinctively felt by the Chinese, and more clearly discerned by Europeans in the result of the late war; and the larger commercial interests growing up under, and in spite of, the present system of restrictions, has only tended, by partially extending the points of contact without placing our relations on a plain basis of reciprocity and equality, to increase the chances. It can only be hoped that the gradual introduction of European arts and ideas and their fructification may in some degree fuse and harmonise the discordant elements before the course of events which otherwise tend to precipitate a violent and disastrous collision are beyond our control. To such a peaceful and beneficial termination of the difficulties which unavoidably beset our relations with China, the efforts of all Western Powers should in the common interest be directed.

These considerations must act as the most powerful checks to any initiative measures of a large and comprehensive character for the improvement of our position and the more rapid development of our commerce.

In this point of view the two greatest obstacles to any advance are the large commercial interests and national revenue at stake, and the danger of being followed by the envoys of other foreign Powers who, having no such great interests to jeopardise, are without this beneficial and most needful check, and may therefore be induced to repeat at a semi-barbarian Court the intrigues and counter-projects for the destruction of our influence and the injury of our trade in the East which are at work in our own times in every capital in Europe, as formerly in India and the Eastern Archipelago.

Russia, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, and America, with their several jealousies and united rivalry with England, their missionary enterprises or commercial and political schemes clashing in their aim and development, are all capable of creating such turmoil, strife, and disturbance throughout the empire, if free access to the Court and the provinces were insisted upon by Great Britain, as could only end in the ejection of Europeans from China as formerly from Japan, or an intestine war in which European power would probably be involved on opposite sides, and to their mutual destruction as States with commercial interests in the country. These, again, might lead to attempts at territorial possession, suggested in the first instance, as in India, in self-defence, and afterwards continued

from necessity. With Russia spreading her gigantic arms to the north and east, Great Britain on the south and west, Spain, Holland, and Portugal with their colonies in the Chinese and Indian seas, a struggle for superiority on the soil of China for exclusive advantages or predominant influence might be centred in Peking and embroil the whole of Europe in hostile relations. The same objection applies to all efforts to enlarge our intercourse and remove limitations, and has ever prevailed. It was recognised as an objection to the last war. The course of events urged on by the opium trade left but little alternative at the last, or there can be no doubt, with the additional fear of the uncertain result of a struggle with a vast empire like China, the resources of which were so imperfectly known, the British Government would have been deterred from any onward step, as these motives did in effect prevent any hostile aggression, so long as it was possible to avoid it, without the sacrifice of our trade.

The war over, it again prevailed, and we are once more in a position to accept as final the increased but limited advantages resulting, or to try for more, and by our policy to avert or provoke disturbing causes which must lead to change. The moderation which marked, and the policy which dictated, our treaties carried us back to the old ground of a nation trading by sufferance, under limitations and restrictions which kept us at the boundaries of the empire, and with us the rest of the Western world, the only difference being enlarged facilities and better guarantees for the pursuit of trade on the coast-line, and within the restricted limits of the five ports selected. It is now for the British Government to determine whether we should rest content with the revenue derived from an import of some 60 million lb. of tea and the export from India of 40,000 chests of opium, netting together some 7 millions sterling to the British and Indian Government, together with the incidental advantage of the raw produce of silk, promising to render us independent of Europe and the adjoining markets for the supply of this staple of an important branch of our manufactures at a cheaper rate, and the market for Indian cotton, the circumstances which lend to China nearly all its importance; or take measures, not free from danger and difficulty, of great prospective magnitude, both in a political and commercial sense, to make China a great market for our manufactures also. At present the Chinese take considerably

less than 2 millions sterling in annual value out of an aggregate production of some 70 millions. In this respect they are of less importance to us as customers than the West India colonies, the Italian States and islands, or one of the larger European States, so small a fraction do they absorb. The prospect that would urge us on should be the hope of seeing China take of our manufactures as large a share as all Europe, and instead of a couple of millions, create a demand for more than twenty. The produce of tea and silk we have, the market for opium and Indian cotton is ours. We want an equally large and beneficial market for our manufactures—our cotton fabrics, woollens, linen, and cutlery, for which our powers of production are all but unlimited.

Two questions suggest themselves, therefore, on the solution of which the decision should depend, it being assumed as unquestioned that something of risk and danger to that which we have must attend all effective efforts to win that which is as yet wanting.

To the first four great commercial objects involved in our relations with China, as above specified, shall we sacrifice the fifth?

Or shall we peril all for the attainment of the fifth, by the endeavour to create a market for our manufactures which at present exists only in its rudiments, and to a small fractional value?

If the extreme exiguity of the market for manufactures be not held to justify the voluntary incurrence of great risk or danger to our tea, silk, opium, and raw cotton trade, which form the great bulk of our commerce as it exists at the present day, British and Indian, it will only remain to be determined what are the various secondary means at our disposal for the improvement of this fifth or manufacturing branch as the primary object, and their respective chances of success on the one hand and dangers attending their adoption on the other. For the dangers, it must be well understood, are of two kinds —those attending failure, and those which may be consequent upon, and the ulterior results of, success in the first instance.

It being borne in mind that whatever we ask and obtain will be claimed and enjoyed by others, it is necessary to consider to what use they are liable to be turned by foreign Powers over whom we can exercise no control, and whose

interests or national jealousies may clearly be adverse to our position in China and the advancement of our commerce. To these various heads of a subject in every point of view great and important, and surrounded by doubts and difficulties of the most embarrassing character, the best information that can be brought by any one individual is insufficient for a perfectly satisfactory solution of the questions which must be discussed. All that can be attempted is to throw some additional light upon the general bearing of the whole, and to contribute such data and practical inferences, illustrative of our present position and its future prospects, as may help to suggest a safe conclusion as circumstances develop new phases in our relations and call for action.

Section III.

Assuming the present basis of our relations to continue, the best course to be pursued in actual circumstances, more especially for the maintenance of our advantageous position in the north, is worthy of consideration. The instructions lately received from her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs are of a nature to suggest inquiry under the three heads to which they refer:—

1. Recourse to the authorities by British subjects in danger of popular violence.

2. Reference in all cases to her Majesty's plenipotentiary for instructions.

3. The verification of the punishment awarded to Chinese offenders.

In reference to the instructions under the first of these heads, it is to be observed that even with such unusual facilities as some of the older missionaries possess who speak the dialect, and are often familiar with the localities they visit, the resource indicated cannot be counted upon as available.

In the Tsingpu affair, as soon as they actually became sensible of danger, it was clearly impossible, nor in one case in a hundred is it probable, that such a resource will be in their power.

In these cases the authorities keep out of the way, they and all their ragged staff of runners and police; and if otherwise, moved by a fear of worse consequences from the acts of the nearest British authority, the means they take to rescue a mal-

treated foreigner are miserably ineffective and uncertain in their results. Whoever will read the details of the species of rescue effected in the Tsingpu business will see that it was by the merest chance the three Englishmen had not their brains beaten out, either before the arrival of the disguised runners or while they were waiting an opportunity of stepping in to render the unfortunate sufferers any service.

It must be clear, therefore, that access to the authorities in emergencies of this nature must always be difficult and generally impracticable for a foreigner. Retreat to a boat or other place of safety is as little likely to be attainable.

A salutary dread of the immediate consequences of violence offered to British subjects, the certainty of its creating greater trouble and danger to the native authorities personally than even the most vigorous efforts to protect the foreigner and seize their assailants will entail, seems to be the best and only protection in this country for Englishmen. When the Chinese authorities of all ranks, from the viceroy at Nanking to the lowest police runners, are thoroughly imbued with this feeling, it will not only rouse them to greater energy but find its way to the populace by certain steps, and render such exertion unnecessary, and the nationality of an Englishman will become his safeguard. Hence the impolicy, not to say impossibility, of treating instances of personal outrage such as that of Tsingpu as police cases, and leaving redress to the ordinary administration of Chinese laws. Where justice exists only nominally, and her image should be represented not only blind but deaf, deplorable consequences would result from such a course. There seems to be a democratic spirit among the Chinese which renders the authorities especially averse to risk collision with the populace or any popular feeling. The Chih-hsien is himself exposed to insult and violence if he attempt to enforce the collection of the taxes in a bad season, and but lately he was besieged here in his own *yamén*. Not ten days ago the Taotai paid 1600 taels of silver to secure a piece of building-ground at the urgent demand of the French consul, rather than exert his authority to compel the owners to take the fair value of $400 offered, and upon the posts put up to mark the boundaries these parties did not hesitate to prohibit its appropriation. The principal check upon the people, and safeguard for the authorities in cases of popular disturbance, seems to be the conviction

under which every Chinese quails, of the terrible vengeance that may pursue them and their families, the tumult once over, if they should have been marked or recognised. In proportion as the magistrate is helpless before numbers, is his power large of wreaking summary and vengeful punishment upon each of the individuals that may form the mob, once separated from each other.

Considerations such as these necessarily influence her Majesty's consul on the spot, who each day has under his eyes these significant details, national and administrative. Where danger threatens to involve the persons or the property of British subjects, his sole direct resource is to fall back upon the treaty, and to cover with the ægis of national inviolability individual interests. By any other course he falls inevitably into the hopeless condition of one waiting for such redress as the common course of justice in China usually affords, where everything assuming its form is venal and arbitrary.

The result of all efforts made to secure the apprehension of thieves or the recovery of property stolen from foreigners is conclusive as to the kind of security to be obtained for British subjects where infractions are dealt with as affairs of police in which justice is to take its ordinary course. In scarcely one instance has any redress been obtained since the port was opened. If thieves are overtaken, it is only that they may disgorge their booty for the benefit of the police sent after them, and the larger the amount the less chance is there of either apprehension or restitution. Witness Mr Hubertson's robbery, where his servant went off with nearly $10,000 in gold and silver, and he was promptly traced and pursued.

Then in reference to the standing orders that, in case of difficulty arising, reference shall invariably be made to her Majesty's plenipotentiary for instructions. Instances have been very numerous showing the nullity of any means of action on the local authorities here through the Imperial Commissioner at Canton, not only in these matters, but in those treated on higher grounds, and affecting our political position. Last year (1847) not only a list of cases where no satisfactory exertion had been made to obtain redress for property stolen was forwarded, but the consul urged upon Sir John Davis, her Majesty's plenipotentiary at the time, the urgent necessity for the removal of the then acting magistrate at Shanghai, who had openly

reviled a consulate servant for taking the service of the barbarians, and dismissed him without redress. The only answer to be obtained from his Excellency Kiying was to the effect that the Chih-hsien, as a territorial officer, was not under his jurisdiction. Fortunately he was removed very shortly for misconduct in the management of Chinese affairs,—for however injurious his proceedings to the British, it was obvious neither redress nor assistance was to be obtained from Canton and the Imperial Commissioner.

The paramount necessity of protecting its subjects in distant countries is of course well understood by her Majesty's Government, and in an oriental State this can only be effected by letting it be known and felt that whoever attacks one of the solitary subjects will be held to have attacked the sovereign and the nation. By this policy a firman, far more potent than the Grand Seignior's in his own territory, is given to every Englishman abroad, ensuring his freedom from injury all over the world.

The treaty viewed in this light becomes a real and efficient bulwark against encroachments, and without such safeguard, with Chinese management, it would at no distant period in all its most important provisions become null and void. No doubt inconvenience results from the necessity of treating casualties of collision between subjects of different countries as infractions of a solemn treaty; but the oriental, and in some respects very peculiar, character of the Chinese, and our relations with them, must be borne in mind, and the lesser of two evils chosen with such discretion and judgment as the circumstances imperatively demand.

At a distant and isolated port like Shanghai, where a brig of war is by no means permanently stationed, the consul is left to his own resources, separated by an interval of many weeks from the assistance of her Majesty's plenipotentiary. When difficulties and emergencies supervene, it is only by prompt demands for redress, and firm resistance to any virtual negation of the rights and privileges guaranteed by treaty, that he can hope successfully to defend the very important interests confided to his charge.

As regards the practicability and expediency of verifying the punishments of any Chinese offender by the presence of a British officer when a sentence is carried into execution, the

instruction received could only have been partially applicable to the Tsingpu offenders had it been earlier received, for the most serious punishment was banishment to a penal settlement in Tartary.

But the whole subject is one of peculiar difficulty, nor can any hope be entertained of submitting in this place a satisfactory solution. It has long been felt that of all the provisions of the two treaties, that which provided for the due administration of the laws on Chinese offenders was the most nugatory. The chief difficulty consists in a British officer being present at all during a trial in a Chinese court, assuming the right were to be granted by treaty. Where the ordinary mode of questioning is by torture, a process utterly repugnant to our notions of justice and our sense of what is due to humanity and truth, are we by our presence to sanction and be made parties to such proceedings? Or are we to interfere and insist upon justice being administered not according to their usages, but ours? The objection to both courses seems equally valid, and yet without the presence of an efficient officer there is no guarantee whatever for the due administration of justice.

As regards the presence of an officer at punishments, unless he is in a position to identify the criminal, which must often from the circumstances of the case be impossible, it may be questioned whether our national character is not in danger of being compromised without the real object of such risk being attained. Nothing could more effectually tend to lower us in the opinion of the Chinese than to be imposed upon by the jugglery of a substituted criminal, or the punishment of an innocent man at our instigation, or even the illegal and excessive punishment of a real offender. Yet to all these we are exposed when we take upon ourselves to watch the course of justice and verify the execution of the sentences. It may finally be observed that there are punishments recognised in the Chinese code revolting for their brutality, which an English officer could scarcely sanction with his presence without discredit to our national feeling. A lesser objection exists in the frequency of minor punishments for theft and petty misdemeanours, so that an interpreter would be required for this duty alone.

These are some of the practical difficulties to the effective exercise of any check upon the proceedings of the Chinese

authorities in criminal informations against Chinese subjects, and to devise a remedy may require more consideration than has probably yet been given to the subject.

From this review of our actual position at the most favourably situated of the northern ports, and the means by which it has been preserved from deterioration, and in many essential points materially improved, a correct inference may be drawn of the injurious consequences of any retrograde influence from Canton, direct or indirect.

APPENDIX II.

CONFIDENTIAL DESPATCH BY CONSUL ALCOCK TO SIR GEORGE BONHAM, JANUARY 13, 1852.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's confidential despatch of the 17th ultimo,[a] and although the departure of the Audax within three days of its receipt leaves me but little time for consideration or inquiry, I have devoted so much time and thought to the subject during the last five years that I venture to reply without delay.

On the general scope of coercive measures adapted to ensure success in any negotiations with the Chinese Government, and more especially on the blockade of the Grand Canal as a very cogent means, I have already in my confidential report of January 19, 1849, and subsequently in another of February 13, 1850, submitted the opinion I had formed after long and careful study of our position in China; and further inquiries and experience of the people we have to deal with have only served to confirm the views contained in those reports.

I took the responsibility of sending Mr Vice-Consul Robertson with the Espiègle to Nanking in the spring of 1848 with the strong conviction that at that particular season, with the tribute of grain uncollected and a thousand of these grain-junks actually under an embargo at Shanghai, any demonstration of force in the neighbourhood of the Grand Canal *would command immediate attention*, and the result went far to establish the

accuracy of the conclusion. Circumstances since then have, however, altered both in a favourable and an adverse sense. Taokuang, with his humiliating experience of the superiority of our arms and his known and acknowledged desire to avoid any further collision during his reign, is no longer on the throne; and his young successor, untaught by the experience of his father, has given very unequivocal signs of disposition to enter upon a different policy. On the other hand, a protracted and serious insurrection in the southern provinces has drained his treasury, weakened his authority, and now threatens, unless he finds means by force or bribery to put the insurgents down, at no distant period to affect the stability of his throne. If the arrogance of youth in the new sovereign should therefore dispose him on the one side to venture on a crusade against Western Powers, his perilous position in regard to his own provinces cannot fail to impress upon him the prudence of at least temporising until a more convenient season. I am led to think, therefore, from all I can learn, that the two contrary forces will go far to neutralise each other, and that Hsienfêng, with all his hostile feeling, will be at the *present moment* as accessible to reason, from the peculiarly embarrassing position in which he is placed, if backed by coercive means, as was his predecessor at the conclusion of the war.

From this your Excellency will perceive that I deem the present time, from the political condition of China, more favourable than any later period may be for the success of coercive measures. As regards the season of the year to be selected, both in reference to the navigation of the Yangtze-kiang and the transmission of the grain tribute, the blockading should not be commenced later than April. During the summer the sun melts the snow on the mountains and sends down the freshets, swelling the river until it overflows its banks with great accession of violence to the current. When the fleet sailed up in July 1842 many of the soundings taken were over paddy-fields, and altogether out of the bed of the river, as the soundings and observations of the Espiègle clearly demonstrated. The tribute also begins to be sent up to Peking from some parts as early as April. A fleet of grain-junks were at the mouth of the canal when the Espiègle made her appearance at the end of March in 1848.

How far a blockade at the present time would have the desired

effect—that is, if made effective before the month of May—is a question upon which I cannot feel any doubt. Much would of course depend upon the suddenness of the descent, and therefore upon the previous secrecy observed; much upon the available nature of the force employed. Besides two or three large-class vessels, I am strongly persuaded there should be at least two small steamers of light draught of water, and one or two brigs, which would be quite as effective against any force the Chinese could bring to bear, and far more manageable and serviceable, as well as less costly, than larger vessels. If the result aimed at were not very promptly attained, it might be necessary to retake Chinkiang-fu as a base of operations, and to detach two or three small-class vessels to watch the entrances of water-courses and canals nearer the mouth of the Yangtze-kiang, of which there are at least four, and through them junks with tribute might otherwise pass to the north and into the Grand Canal at some point above the Yangtze-kiang, and between it and the Yellow river. There is also a very free communication with all the lowland districts south of the Yangtze-kiang and the north above Nanking by means of the *Seu ho*, which runs from Soochow west into the Yangtze-kiang at *Wu Hu* and *Taiping*. But from this point northward there does not appear to be any good water communication leading to the Grand Canal without descending the Yangtze-kiang as far as *Iching* and *Kwachow* on the two mouths of the Grand Canal at its junction with the Yangtze-kiang below Nanking. These secured would therefore stop the main traffic by the *Seu ho* route to the north for the relief of Peking. My own impression is that if no warning were given, nor time allowed for previous preparation, our demands would be granted within one month of the commencement of the blockade. If from any unforeseen cause, however, the negotiations were protracted, and the Chinese Government had leisure to recover from its panic and adopt plans for obtaining tribute and grain by circuitous routes, it would be in that case that Chinkiang-fu might be required, together with a good watch on the various tributaries of the Yangtze-kiang below and eastward of Nanking already referred to; and perhaps on the coast towards the Yellow river and the Peiho two or three cruisers might be required to intercept junks *sent by sea* with tribute. Such in effect is the intention of the Chinese Government at the present moment, without any refer-

ence to us. The grain to be collected from the eight provinces, divided into upper and lower, consists of the common grain and of white rice, the latter for the consumption of the emperor and his Court, which it is intended shall be sent this season by sea from *Shanghai*,—a circumstance peculiarly favourable to the success of any blockading measures, since, as it would be necessary under any contingencies to cover Shanghai and our large interests there with an effective force, the same means would enable her Majesty's Government to lay an embargo on a large and especially important portion of the tribute already collected in the port. I do not imagine it would be contemplated to abandon Shanghai, and I am far from thinking it would be either necessary or expedient—though at Ningpo, Foochow, and perhaps Amoy, it might be considered well—to withdraw the few foreigners for a time. At Canton, no doubt, it would be imperative either to give adequate protection or to abandon the place. On this point I am scarcely called upon to offer an opinion. It probably does not enter into any plans contemplated to strike a blow at Canton, or to adopt any measure necessarily entailing bloodshed and heavy loss: were it otherwise, no doubt the fall of Canton and the humiliation of the Cantonese would in itself go far to read a salutary lesson throughout the empire, and especially at Peking, where there is reason to believe they look upon Canton and the Cantonese as affording the great barrier to our progress, from our inability to make any impression either upon the city or the people.

I do not, of course, presume to offer these suggestions on the general measures which might be found needful for the protection of British interests along the coast, and the distribution and economising of our forces while a blockade on the Yangtze-kiang was being effected, as better informed than your Excellency on such points, but merely refer to them incidentally as necessary parts of any plan for demanding redress by coercive measures at the mouth of the Grand Canal.

For the better illustration of the points touched upon in this despatch in reference to the different points of access to the Grand Canal, either coastwise or by the Yangtze-kiang below Nanking and the two mouths of the canal, which will have to be borne in mind, I beg to enclose a very rough and hasty plan of the main channels, taken chiefly from the elaborate map of the empire published under the Jesuits, and which Mr Medhurst,

when my last confidential report was in hand, was good enough at my suggestion to work at on an enlarged scale, availing himself of all the additional information, by comparison of maps, itineraries, &c., that was accessible.

I shall be glad if in this somewhat hasty reply to your Excellency's despatch I have been able to afford such information as you have desired; but if not, or upon any other points it should appear that further inquiries can be prosecuted advantageously and without creating suspicion, I shall be happy to give my best efforts to carry out your Excellency's instructions.

APPENDIX III.

CONFIDENTIAL DESPATCH TO SIR GEORGE BONHAM, DATED JUNE 17, 1852. (EXTRACT.)

If I might without presumption express an opinion on our general policy in China, I should add that it seems in danger of being paralysed by the two antagonistic forces [alluded to in the preamble], and by necessities difficult to reconcile. The magnitude and extreme importance of our interests in the East —in commerce and revenue (for, as I have shown, the China trade is the connecting-link between Great Britain and India, and necessary to complete the circle of trading operations)— suggest on the one hand the necessity of avoiding all measures that may rashly jeopardise such interests, yet nevertheless make it imperative on the other to adopt firmly and unhesitatingly whatever steps may be necessary to prevent loss or deterioration. How these can best be reconciled is the problem to be solved. As late as the last war, throughout all our previous intercourse the attempt had been made to arrive at the solution by a system of temporising and concession, even to that which was unjust and injurious, and this steadily carried out, with a few rare and brief exceptions. Our policy since the treaty has manifested a tendency to an opposite course, encouraged no doubt by the result of the first determined stand made. It has,

nevertheless, been so hesitatingly developed that we appear to halt between the two. In words we have asserted resistance to insult or wrongful treatment, but in acts we have not seldom temporised and submitted. The fruit of this policy we now are beginning to reap. Principles of action have sometimes been asserted and then abandoned, instead of being persisted in until the end was accomplished. In dealing with the Chinese, however, nothing appears to be so necessary as to keep the ground once assumed. If this be true, there cannot be too much caution used in first asserting or contending for a right; but that step once taken, there is no safe halting-place between it and full success. A course of alternate opposition and submission cannot do otherwise than end in defeat; and defeat in this country is never limited to its immediate consequences. It has appeared, on looking back through the ten years which have now elapsed since the termination of the war, that the first half of the period was passed in comparative security under the strong influence its events were calculated to exercise on the Chinese mind; but, true to their invariable policy, they have never ceased to seek by every means in their power to make the British authorities develop under what instructions they were acting and to penetrate into their true spirit, in order to ascertain the limits to which our sufferance would extend and the nature of the powers of resistance or retaliation her Majesty's Government were ready to authorise. I think it cannot be matter of doubt to any one resident in China throughout this period, that during the latter portion the Chinese have felt assured of the essentially pacific determination of our Government and the policy of endurance and sufferance in all cases of minor wrongs. And, assured under such a system (with the known impossibility of any direct action in Peking), they have, during the last two years more especially, felt emboldened, systematically, by a series of apparently small encroachments and aggressions, to undermine our position, and to restore, as nearly as may be, the state of things existing before the war, extending the system to all the ports.

With this conviction I have thought it desirable to bring before her Majesty's plenipotentiary in detail many illustrations of the deteriorating influences at work at this port, and now venture to pass these rapidly in review, that their collective evidence may not be wanting. And in order that I may be

brief, I shall merely note in the margin the number and dates of various despatches bearing upon similar matters, without further reference to their contents. By these I think it will be seen that the general current and tendency of all the official acts for the last two years upon which I have frequently commented as they occurred has been distrust, and strongly adverse alike to our trade and the stability of our position.

Evidence, I think, will be found in these records to establish the fact that the present Taotai Wu (or Samqua, as he is more familiarly known, of Canton trading memory) has been especially selected as the chief agent to initiate, and the fit instrument for carrying out, a retrograde policy: his character, means, and the general direction of his efforts to damage our local position, territorial and social—to cripple and restrict our trade, and to Cantonise the whole of our relations both with people and authorities in the north—are all in keeping with this mission, and incomprehensible on any other supposition.

The steps of his progress have been carefully watched, and in the despatches noted in the margin traced, together with their effects—neither very apparent on the surface. These may perhaps best be considered by aid of a somewhat arbitrary division as to subjects rather than chronologically, for they have generally run on conterminous and parallel lines. Starting from the Tsingpu affair, in the spring of 1848, and his baffled efforts to pluck from us the best fruit of the risks incurred to vindicate an important principle, from which date he hung about the place—in the background it is true, but not the less busy as a spy from Nanking, between which place and Shanghai, occasionally acting Taotai, at others absent, he oscillated until the fit time appeared to have arrived. After the accession of the new emperor, Lin was displaced from the Taotai office, and he was finally installed by "imperial appointment" to put his hand to the work before him. His steps may be traced in the sinister influences and obstruction brought to bear upon all our interests.

The *land tenure and regulations* under which a foreign colony had rapidly risen covering more than a hundred acres of land, as an element of strength and independence to the British more especially, seems to have excited both the jealousy and the fears of the Chinese authorities. There seemed no limit to its progress and development; each year saw more and more land

occupied, while houses of a large and costly description rapidly filled up the vacant spaces.

Before Wu came *ostensibly* upon the scene some progress had been made in the creation of difficulties, and the authorities having in the spring of 1849 granted a large and absurdly disproportionate tract to the French, over which the French consul claimed a territorial jurisdiction, the national susceptibilities of the Americans gave the opportunity of bringing French and Americans, and the latter and the English, into collision, and they were not slow to profit by it to set the land regulations practically aside while officially appearing to uphold them.

The desire of the community to carry out an extravagant and not very practicable scheme for a new park or exercise-course that should enclose nearly the whole arable ground and villages within our limits afforded the next opportunity, and the arrogant humour and superstitions of the Fukein clans supplied the ready instruments for inflicting a second blow upon the rights and security of the foreigner at Shanghai connected with the occupation of land.

These attacks and aggressions have since been perseveringly followed up—popular commotions, abusive and menacing placards, having all been used in turns to the damage of our position, and the result has been discredit, broken regulations, divided and antagonistic pretensions between the two most numerous classes of foreign residents—the British and American—and between all foreigners and the Fukein clans, the most turbulent and aggressive of the native population at the port,—a result of which, looking to all the present embarrassment and future danger to our interests it is calculated to produce, I am bound to say I think Samqua may well be proud. The national vanity of the French leading them to an absurd and useless acquisition, the love of exercise of the British leading the equestrians to press an ill-advised and impracticable scheme for a three-mile racecourse, and the national susceptibilities of the Americans leading them to dispute the land tenure which hitherto had been the condition of their own security,—all have been adroitly turned to the greatest advantage, to the profit of the Chinese and the serious detriment of the foreigner.

The progress made in creating obstacles to our *commerce* has been not less worthy of remark. For a system of total laxity in the custom-house administration under Lin a capricious

alternation of vigilance and neglect, under which oppressive acts of partiality and injustice are frequently perpetrated, has been substituted, to the great derangement of operations in trade. The carrying trade has been harassed and impeded, and the Taotai is now actively engaged in efforts to get the cargo-boats under his exclusive control, and to organise a *cohong* of five firms on the model of the ancient establishments at Canton, while already—I believe at his suggestion (indeed he scarcely denies it)—information has reached me that a new transit duty of seven mace per picul has been levied at Chung-An on the produce proceeding thence from the Black Tea districts to Shanghai. A duty of over 7 per cent, in violation of one of the most important of our treaty stipulations, with a monopoly of cargo-boats, a right to levy new transit duties, and a *cohong*—the three leading advantages secured by the treaty vanish. It is vain to disguise the fact, for nothing can be clearer or more certain. On these points I have been collecting detailed information, and shall shortly be enabled to write more fully on the subject. I beg your Excellency in the meantime to rest assured that the main facts have already been placed beyond doubt. In connection with these, freedom of access to different points in the interior and with Ningpo by the inland route as advantages long enjoyed have also attracted attention, and some more feeble efforts have been made to throw obstacles in the way.

In the *administration of justice* perhaps more than in any other directions adverse influences have been brought to bear with complete effect. Redress for any injury inflicted on a foreigner, protection from frauds, or recovery of debts, are all wholly unattainable. The action of the Chinese tribunals in our behalf is null and void, and the course taken by the authorities in all cases referred to there amounts to a total denial of justice. The act of the Taotai in seizing and flogging Mr ——'s boatmen was only wanting to withdraw from the foreigners all protection dependent upon the Chinese laws and their administration under our treaties.

Under these three heads, therefore, I would sum up the progressive and evident deterioration in our position here. The tenure of land, the operations of trade, the administration of justice, have all been objects of attack, and with serious prejudice. That, however, which is at present evident as the

effect of the steps taken, forms but a small part of the injury which will in a very short period be too manifest to be overlooked if no determined steps are taken to reverse the policy now pursued. The time, I am firmly persuaded, has arrived for meeting by energetic action these insidious attacks—as the *least dangerous course*—if our most important interests here are really to be defended with any effect.

How this may best be done I feel your Excellency is entitled to demand from the officer who seeks so earnestly to impress you with a conviction that action is necessary, and I have no wish to shrink from the responsibility of suggesting measures by which I conceive some positive good may be effected, to repair the mischief, and much impending evil at all events averted.

In reference to the land, also, it would seem very desirable that some understanding should be come to with the United States *chargé d'affaires* by which any participation in the advantages of the British location, consistent with the security of all, should be freely conceded, while anything incompatible *with this condition* must be as certainly resisted, in their interest not less than ours. If Dr Parker prove impracticable I see no resource but a reference home, when I trust all the real importance of the questions at issue to the *interests of British trade and the British position at this port* will be steadily kept in view; nor should it be forgotten that in its maintenance all foreign States are deeply interested, whatever the Americans for the moment may think. Any injury to our position must recoil with double force upon so weak and small a minority as they are when left to stand alone.

As regards the measures now in progress for organising a *cohong*, levying new transit duties, and creating a monopoly of cargo-boats, all tending in the most serious degree to fetter our trade, in indirect violation of the express stipulations of our treaty, I confess there seems to be but one course consistent with the credit of our Government or the defence of our interests, and that is resolutely and firmly to resist them as infractions of treaty. Two modes of doing this, however, suggest themselves. The one is by active proceedings—prohibiting the payment of any maritime duties by British subjects until satisfaction is obtained, and a distinct intimation that if this does not suffice other *and more determined measures should*

follow. The other involves a system of *negation* that would be peculiarly embarrassing to the Chinese local authorities, and eventually to the Government at Peking. This may be carried out by simply holding the treaty to be *in abeyance* by their own acts, and declining to take any steps with British subjects to enforce the conditions—whether as regarded customs, access to the interior, the purchase of land, or the administration of justice—so long as the measures objected to were persisted in.

In reference to these two courses, I will not hesitate to say that, if left to my discretion, I should adopt the first; but the condition of ultimate success would be the certainty that, if the object was not attained by such means, her Majesty's Government would feel pledged to send a squadron to the mouth of the Grand Canal next spring with an imperative demand for the Taotai's disgrace and the reversal of all this obnoxious policy, and authority to resort to coercive measures if not listened to.

If, however, it should be deemed preferable to incur the risk of doing nothing—or what, I confess, appears to me even more dangerous, to make protests, or demonstrations which there is no serious intention of following up to their legitimate conclusion—the negative policy is of course the only one to be attempted. The responsibility of the initiative would then be thrown upon the Chinese themselves. The tables would be turned, and the Chinese will be left to right themselves as they best could, while a large revenue will slip through their hands and manifold complications and embarrassments in their relations with foreigners arise to their confusion. The task, in fine, they now assign to us would devolve upon them, and their sole remedy, if they did not choose to give way, would be to stop the trade; but as that would be a plain and ostensible *casus belli*, they will not attempt it.

If, on the other side, nothing effective be done, I must frankly state my conviction that our position in the north will rapidly deteriorate, and our relations be embroiled, if not irreparably injured. I believe means for the amelioration of both may be safely taken, and have long been required; but I feel still more strongly convinced that at no distant period they *must* be taken, and the longer they are delayed the greater will be the ultimate cost, and the more imminent the hazard to our future trade and relations with China.

If I am correct in these inferences, the conclusion of the whole must be that the time has arrived when it will be no longer safe to defer strong and effective measures in defence of our interests, and that there is a clear necessity for present action to avert at no distant period a costly war and a shock to this empire it is so ill capable of sustaining, that it must of necessity be attended with great peril not only to the present dynasty but to the existing social organisation of the country.

APPENDIX IV.

ACCOUNT OF THE SALT TRADE ANNEXED TO MR PARKES' SUMMARY OF THE NATIVE MARITIME TRADE OF FOOCHOW, 1846. (EXTRACTS.)

They have constituted the sale of salt a monopoly, which they place in the hands of a set of merchants whom they hold liable for the payment of a fixed amount of tax. This, in some instances, falls rather heavy upon them, but proves an easy measure to the authorities, who have thus but little trouble or expense of collection. All the supplies of salt are drawn from the sea-shore, and consequently there is an appointment of salt inspector in every maritime province, who superintends everything connected with the *gabelle:* he holds a high rank and receives good emoluments from the Government, 3000 taels per annum. It also forms one of the duties of the governor-general of the province to act as chief superintendent of salt excise.

Most of the supplies from Fukien have to be sent into the interior and the adjacent province of Kiangsi *viâ* Foochow. The salt is made all along the shore to the southward. . . .

The salt is made at these places by people belonging to the various localities, and the manufacture gives employment to numbers of individuals, who in those sterile districts have few other means of subsistence. The general method of manu-

facture is to collect the saturated loam from the beach in heaps, and thence to draw off the brine by drainage into large but shallow-built vats, when crystallisation is effected by exposure to the natural heat of the sun. The brine being all extracted from the heap, it is removed to the beach, and the same earth, having been immersed in the salt-tide, can again be used. In fine weather great quantities can thus be expeditiously manufactured, but a succession of rain stops the works, and a scarcity in the supplies is the consequence. The producers are exempted from all taxes or charges on the part of the Government, on the consideration that they are in mean labouring circumstances, though many of the salt-farms are very extensive, and some of their conductors possessed of better competence than the merchants, on whom the whole burden of taxation falls. Junks are despatched to these places by the salt merchants for freights.

The Government system of exacting a fixed annual amount of *gabelle* is very defective, and places the trade, which might prosper under other management, on an unhealthy basis. When the trade is dull, it becomes still more depressed by the nature of the liabilities that the merchants have at all times equally to bear, and which then become burdensome; and again, on the other hand, in case of a thriving season, the revenue is in no way advantaged. Their wretched executive, however, prevents any improvement. They therefore content themselves with fixing a stated sum, upwards of 300,000 taels per annum; and if they can secure the requisite number of persons to undertake to dispose of a certain quantity of salt that will yield excise to this amount, they are content. Thus each merchant is bound to conduct the sale of the quantity that he undertakes, or rather is held responsible for the amount of duty due on such quantity, and having once paid this up, should he be so disposed, he is at perfect liberty to transport and sell more salt on his own account, duty free; whilst, on the other hand, should he, from a glut in the market or other circumstances, not be able to dispose of the quantity of which he had undertaken the sale, he has still to pay duty on the whole at a fixed unalterable rate.

It is therefore the imminent risk attending salt speculations that causes people of property to be so averse towards entering them. They involve a great outlay of capital, with continual

liability but uncertain remuneration. Thus, if a man embarks the whole or greater part of his means in speculations which do not succeed, he becomes instantly embarrassed with the Government, and, with no incomings to relieve him, may perhaps not succeed in recovering his first failure. Most of the merchants being men who are selected merely on account of their capital, the management of their business is entirely in the hands of those they employ, for whose honesty or capacity they are mainly dependent for success. The charges and expenses connected with carrying on a salt business are very great. Yet there are several instances of old merchants employing good managing men, and possessing plenty of supporting capital, having amassed large fortunes in the trade, though, on the contrary, cases are much more numerous of speculators having suffered losses and contracted debts with the Government. A debt to the State of no less than 1,450,000 taels by the salt dealers of Foochow has thus gradually collected.

The nomination of salt merchants is almost invariably compulsory, and no one can retire from the business without he is totally unable from want of means to continue in it. In these cases the reflection that they were obliged to undertake the transactions that led to their ruin must add increased poignancy to their losses. When once, however, they have undertaken a transaction, they are much favoured by the authorities, who give them entertainments and confer honours and distinctions upon them. There are head merchants appointed, who hold some control over the proceedings of the others. To be a head merchant a man must be of known character and not owing anything to the Government. They are responsible for all the other merchants, who, however trustworthy, have all to be secured by the head merchants. In case of any merchant becoming in arrears with the payment of his duties, the salt inspector orders the head merchants to limit him to a certain time in which to liquidate all charges. According as the case needs, the head merchants convene and consult as to whether they should pray for an extension of the term or require some of the other merchants in substantial circumstances to lend the necessary amounts, or perhaps they may proceed to pay it themselves. If also they find that any of the other merchants are incompetent, from want of means, to manage their business, they represent the same to the salt inspector, that they may be

allowed to retire. At present there are four head-merchants out of a total of sixty-one. . . .

Smuggling is also carried on to some extent. As this, however, affects the vital interests of the salt merchants, they show great vigilance in investigating and reporting to the authorities any instances that may come within their knowledge, and for this purpose fit up and maintain several small vessels which keep up a constant watch against contraband proceedings.

There are a multiplicity of fees and charges which prove very onerous to the merchants. [Here follows a list of forty-seven separate fees, dues, and charges, amounting to 15,300 taels, or about £5000 sterling, on 900.000 lb. weight. or about one-eighth of a penny per lb.]

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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